Who Gets Ahead and Why
New Evidence About Our Defective Meritocracy

'Fatal'
A Short Story
by Helen Chasin

THE NEW REPUBLIC

June 2, 1979 Price One Dollar

RITTER LIBRARY
BALDWIN-WALLACE COLLEGE
MAY 31 1979

The Georgetown Battlefront • Why America is Funny

RITTER LIB PERIODICALS
BALDWIN WALLACE COLL
BEREA, OH 44017

Arab Against Arab: *Sadat and His Enemies*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

14 factors that could affect the performance of your next prescription.

Before you ask your pharmacist for a cheaper version of the medication prescribed by your doctor, consider.

In making the "same" drug, different companies may exercise different levels of skill and care. They formulate and manufacture the "same" product differently.

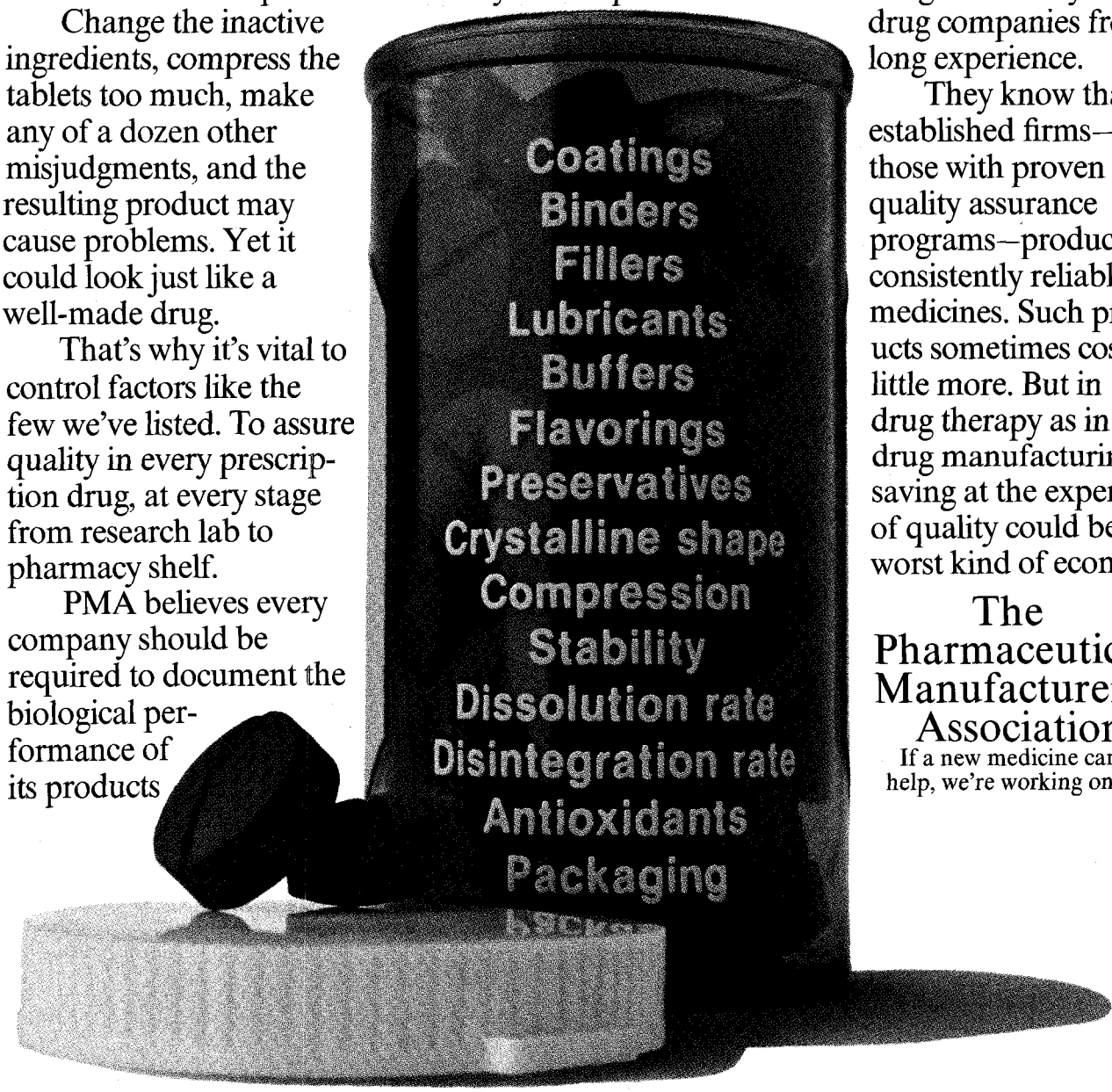
Change the inactive ingredients, compress the tablets too much, make any of a dozen other misjudgments, and the resulting product may cause problems. Yet it could look just like a well-made drug.

That's why it's vital to control factors like the few we've listed. To assure quality in every prescription drug, at every stage from research lab to pharmacy shelf.

PMA believes every company should be required to document the biological performance of its products and identify the actual manufacturer on the package label. Because the manufacturer's competence is the key to quality.

To know you're getting a drug of assured quality at an acceptable price, ask your doctor and your pharmacist. These professionals know drugs. And they know drug companies from long experience.

They know that established firms—those with proven quality assurance programs—produce consistently reliable medicines. Such products sometimes cost a little more. But in drug therapy as in drug manufacturing, a saving at the expense of quality could be the worst kind of economy.



The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association.

If a new medicine can help, we're working on it.

With your health at stake, you may want to know more. Please write for our "Key Facts" booklet. It's free.
The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, Dept. NE-906, 1155 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB

from Washington
June 2, 1979

In the Clouds

At 6:05 p.m. on Sunday, June 23, 1929, the newly christened "Airway Limited" tunneled out of Pennsylvania Station, New York City, on track 15, and I wondered if any young reporter 50 years hence would have an assignment half as exciting. I had ticket number one in the first party of invited passengers on the TAT air-train service (fly by day, sleep on the train at night) that would cut the time across the United States in half, to 48 hours. Price: $351.94 one way. And there would be a lavatory on the plane, the brochure said.

In the parlor car as we rumbled across New Jersey I opened the *New York Times*. Richard Ouhlahan from Washington on the new naval pact; Russel Owen covering Commander Richard E. Byrd at Little America; Walter Duranty from Moscow; and Ambassador Charles Dawes getting ready to stun the Court of St. James's at his first reception by not wearing silk knee breeches. The Anti-Saloon League picked next Sunday to back Hoover on law enforcement. The new Chevrolet coach cost $595. Wanamaker's had crepe frocks for $18 and Brill Brothers Palm Beach suits for $16.50. An editorial praised the president, now in office four months, for getting his budget at less than Coolidge's.

I turned to the stocks. I had 30 shares of GM after the split. It was about all I had except for 12 GE. The GM had been selling at 187 when John J. Raskob sailed for Europe in March. He told reporters it would reach 225. It reached that in a week. Now it was split and I loved it. General Electric had just risen from 295 to 324. I was getting rich. Hoover Boom followed Coolidge Boom. Nothing could top it. On the financial page, though, the Guaranty Trust Survey said that leading industries were operating "at nearly, if not quite, the highest levels in their history" and that a "trade recession" was due. "Better it should arrive now, to make way for revival of activity in the autumn."

Recession? It wouldn't last if it came. It was an electric time: a sense of limitless possibilities, the Great Engineer's hand on the throttle, events like this pioneer TAT air-train service all the time; the thrust of free enterprise. Back in Manhattan the Woolworth building (792 feet) was challenged by the ascending Chrysler Building (1046) and the Empire State (1250—not counting "dirigible masts"). And the Pennsylvania Station itself, covering four square blocks, symbol of railway dominance, would probably last a century.

At the Port Columbus, Ohio airport terminus at 7:55 a.m. next day (at the end of a canopied walkway from the Pullman) stood our aircraft, a Ford Trimotor—the famous Tin Goose. I stood in awe. It wasn't the size (78 feet, wing-tip to wing-tip) but the corrugated metal sides; they looked like the top off a barn. If they could make that stuff fly they could do anything. Our party filled the seats, all 10 of them. There were five wicker seats on a side, with a narrow center aisle. Shoulders and heads of two pilots appeared above the half-partition in the cockpit, and a uniformed "courier," who was ready for the inevitable first quip, "Where are the parachutes?" With an appreciative grin at the witticism, he explained that the plane could sustain flight with only two of its gigantic Pratt and Whitney motors, and that even with only one it could make a "safe gradual downward glide." It was conditionally reassuring.

"Clear!" shouted the uniformed captain. The first engine popped and turned, then the second, then all three; we bounced over to the warm-up area, and he gave them the gun. Noise? An engineer friend, Preston Bassett, prepared later these comparative decibel counts: business office—60; Lexington Avenue Express—100; Cave of the Winds, Niagara—100; Ford Trimotor—110. The courier brought a tray of chewing gum and cotton wads.

My seat is number two. The ceiling is just within reach. Outside of my sliding window is an egg-shaped engine with all its valves tapping like mad and the propeller a haze. The pitch rises. Now somebody shoots a Very pistol, its green fireball arc signaling the all-clear for takeoff. I watch the big black tire. The wheel jumps a tuft and stays suspended a second or two. Then it takes another hop and this time doesn't come down. We bank up against the sky. Think of it! We are as high as the Eiffel Tower.

Today we shall touch down at Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Wichita and Waynoka, wherever that is—Oklahoma, I think. The new Transcontinental Air Transport, Inc. has airports every 250 miles or so. Planes can't fly at night, of course, and the fastest coast-to-coast rail service is about 80 hours, with a change at Chicago. So the TAT shrinks the nation by half.

My brochure tells me about it: "You have crossed the continent in 48 hours. It brings Atlantic and Pacific cities two days nearer each other." The plane will hurtle along at 100 miles an hour. A modest note: "Passengers are kindly requested to observe the Prohibition Amendment."

So now it is next morning. We have bounced down and up, made a Pony Express jump to a Pullman hitched to the Santa Fe express at Waynoka, rolled all night to Clovis, and now here we are in the air again, the second day. There was fog briefly after Indianapolis and the pilot brought us down to tree-top level; the cattle broke and ran on one farm, and I saw an angry dog streaking across the pasture after us. The brochure says: "The drone of the motors frequently induces sleep." I slide open the window but shut it quick. More cotton, please.

We come down into simmering 106-degree heat at Winslow, this second day, then climb up again for the mountains. We see a train crawling over the desert—the tracks coiling ahead for miles. The courier confides that the pilot's salary is $12,000. Wow. Mine is $4680, but I made $943.50 last year in outside stuff, and now look at those stocks! We are all in the market, it turns out. We yell quotations across the aisle. It is true the farmers are in bad shape. But Senate majority leader Jim Watson says the new Smoot-Hawley tariff will fix that "within 30 days." People back home are borrowing to get rich. Installment buying has been discovered. Enjoy now; pay later. Outstanding consumer debt is rather startling: $150 billion, maybe.

Over the mountains without pressurized cabin, to Los Angeles at 5:52 p.m. Pacific time. Another vast achievement—radio, sound pictures, television—and now this. What a year; no nation dares attack us, we have won permanent peace by isolating ourselves; Europe owes us money, and now we have the dad-blamedest stock market boom of all time! They will remember us in 1929, I guess, 50 years hence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 180, No. 22, Issue 3360, June 2, 1979. Published weekly (except the issues of July 14, July 28, August 11, September 8) and distributed by The New Republic, Inc., 1220 19th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036. Phone (202) 331-7494. Single copy, $1.00; Yearly subscriptions, $24; foreign, $27; students, $17.

Copyright 1979 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide.

Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies and changes of address to Subscription Service Department, The New Republic, P.O. Box 705, Whitinsville, MA 01588. **Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, but cannot be considered or returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.**

Contents

TRB from Washington	**3**	In the Clouds
Comment	**5**	The Guys in Abu Dhabi
William A. Henry III	**6**	Massachusetts Mussolini
	7	Correspondence
Jeffrey C. Alexander	**10**	Sociology for Liberals
Morton Kondracke	**12**	The War Against Sadat
Nicholas Lemann	**16**	War-Torn Georgetown
Helen Chasin	**19**	"Fatal"
		Books and the Arts
Stanley Kauffmann	**24**	Films: Curious Careers
Ann Douglas	**25**	*America's Humor* by Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill *Amusing the Million* by John E. Kasson
David Sofield	**26**	Poem: "In Slow Motion"
Herbert Gintis	**29**	*Who Gets Ahead?* by Christopher Jencks and others
Jay Parini	**32**	Poem: "This Scrying"
Robert Towers	**33**	*Celebrations and Attacks* by Irving Howe
Barbara Grizzuti Harrison	**35**	*On Lies, Secrets and Silence* by Adrienne Rich
Fritz Stern	**37**	*Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* by Simon Schama
Marc Granetz	**38**	*Prize Stories 1979: The O. Henry Awards* edited by William Abrahams
Brief Reviews	**39**	*Jake's Thing* by Kingsley Amis *The Last Mandarin* by Stephen Becker
Washington Diarist	**42**	Leave the Bombing to Us

MOVING?

PLEASE NOTIFY US
6 WEEKS IN ADVANCE

NEW ADDRESS:

Name (please print)

Address

City State Zip

MAIL TO:
Subscription Service Department
The New Republic
P.O. Box 58
Whitinsville, MA 01588

ATTACH LABEL HERE for address change or inquiry. If you are receiving duplicate copies of TNR please send both labels. If moving, list new address above. Note: your subscription will end with the month and year given on the top line of label. Example: 1279 means subscription will end in December 1979

Staff

Editor—*Martin Peretz*
Publisher—*Robert J. Myers*
Managing Editor—*Michael Kinsley*
Literary Editor—*Jack Beatty*
Executive Editor—*Morton M. Kondracke*
Senior Editor—*John Osborne*
Politics Editor—*Ken Bode*
Assistant to the Editors—*Gwen Somers*
Films and Theater—*Stanley Kauffmann*
Poetry Editor—*Robert Pinsky*
Production Manager—*Dorothy Wickenden*
Literary Assistant—*Ann Hulbert*
Staff Writer—*Stephen Chapman*
Production Assistant—*Lisa Derman*

Contributing Editors—*Robert Brustein, Robert Coles, Henry Fairlie, Paul Fussell, Joseph Featherstone, Gerald W. Johnson, Nathan Lewin, Roger Morris, Joyce Carol Oates, Paul Robinson, Tad Szulc, Michael Walzer, Leon Wieseltier*
Staff Photographer—*Jeff Vinson*
Rights and Permissions—*Dara Buckner*
Circulation Manager—*Elizabeth Scanlan O'Brien*
Business Manager—*Rhonda Davis Schoem*
Assistant Business Manager—*J. Kristine Klasman*
Director of Advertising—*Bonnie Perkel, 250 West 57th St, Room 2517, New York, NY 10019 (212) 581-6477*
Advertising Coordinator—*Elizabeth McGee*
Receptionist—*Ruby McGowan*
Staff Associate—*Robert Howard*
Leadership Network Advertising—*Robert F. Sennott Jr., New York (212) 682-4500*

Cover: "Combat Between Giaour and Pasha" (1835) by Eugène Delacroix. Petit-Palais, Paris. Article on page 12.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

June 2, 1979

The Guys in Abu Dhabi

The House Democratic Caucus voted overwhelmingly on May 22 to oppose President Carter's plan to decontrol domestic oil prices. Representative Toby Moffett of Connecticut asked, "Will it be the guys in the rooms in Abu Dhabi who determine the price of oil in the United States?" The answer is yes, OPEC sets the price of oil. Legislating the price of oil to stay low is like legislating the earth to stop turning. This will be true for as long as the government pursues policies that make us more dependent on imported oil, rather than less so.

Domestic oil price controls increase the stranglehold of the guys in Abu Dhabi in two ways. First, by holding down the retail price of oil products, domestic controls increase the demand for oil. This demand can only be satisfied by increased imports. Second, controls artificially constrain domestic production. If the domestic control price is $10 a barrel and the world price is $18, we will find ourselves paying OPEC $18 for a barrel of oil identical to one we could have produced domestically for $11, but didn't.

Nobody expects vision and courage out of the House of Representatives anymore, but President Carter has not done his decontrol plan any service with his demagogic attacks on oil company profits. We support a tax on the windfall profits that domestic oil producers will reap from decontrol. Indeed, President Carter's proposed tax looks to us like all bark and no bite, since it permits most of the windfall to escape. But the possibility of a windfall does not mean that the oil companies are immoral, and implying that they are needlessly muddies the debate.

The potential windfall consists of the fact that most oil costs a lot less to produce than the artificially high price OPEC has set for it. We can't prevent OPEC from pocketing $18 for oil that costs 25 cents to produce. We don't want to prevent domestic producers from getting $18 for oil from new sources that will cost $18 to produce. But after decontrol, domestic producers suddenly will be able to get $18 for oil that costs them only four or five dollars to produce. This is completely fortuitous. It has nothing to do with investment or risk-taking or any other activity for which profit is a fair reward: it is a windfall.

Of course people enjoy windfalls all the time, when their houses rise in value or when a wealthy aunt dies. Ordinarily they suffer only the normal revenges of the tax system. There are two good reasons why these windfall profits for the oil companies should be treated differently. First, when the government is asking everybody to make sacrifices to cope with the energy crisis, it's especially important that nobody be seen to gain from it fortuitously. Second, since the oil companies are our liaison to the OPEC monopoly, it's wise to prevent them from becoming de facto members.

Is this so terribly complicated? Couldn't President Carter explain it in a way that the American people—and even members of Congress—could understand, without suggesting that the oil companies are evil incarnate and their profits are excessive? In fact, oil industry profits appear to be quite moderate, compared to other large American companies (though there is some dispute about accounting methods). According to *Fortune* magazine's annual calculations, oil company stockholders enjoyed an average return on their equity of 13.4 percent, compared to an average of 14.3 percent for all the *Fortune* 500.

Some oil companies have been staging their own morality play on the subject of profits, with a different script than President Carter's. The companies argue that they need their windfall to finance exploration and development of new oil. Their friends on Capitol Hill want to exempt from the already modest windfall tax any profits that are "ploughed back" into investment.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This kind of crude ploy invites the very sort of suspicions about their motives that the oil companies resent. It is the *potential* for profit that stimulates investment. If decontrol makes new domestic production profitable for the oil companies, they do not also need to be given the money to finance these ventures. Investors will be happy to supply it.

Corporate profits are not inherently evil, nor are they a natural right of all large corporations. In this respect, at least, economic life is not a morality play.

But he hasn't made the tax cuts come on time.

Massachusetts Mussolini

Edward Joseph King ran for governor of Massachusetts as a sort of Irish Mussolini, the man from the Massachusetts Port Authority who made the airplanes run on time. He was big and beefy and untroubled by doubt, a former Baltimore Colts footballer who promised to be a "can-do" governor. In the one state carried by George McGovern in 1972, the state that produced Ted Kennedy, Ed Brooke and Robert Drinan, Ed King won the 1978 election for governor by denouncing abortion, lenient judges and teenage drinking, and by promising tax cuts for homeowners and big business. He said he would bring back patronage, bodyguards and state limousines. Sneering at Governor Michael Dukakis, who had cost him his Massport job, and whom King in turn stunned in last September's primary, the new boss in Massachusetts promised, "The era of anti-politics is over."

And it is. In the words of liberal state representative Barney Frank, King's government "is not an administration. It's a 20th reunion." King does prefer appointees from his alma mater, Boston College, and avoids alumni of Harvard (Barney Frank's alma mater). But Frank's meaning is metaphoric: King's team is heavily white, Irish, Catholic and male. Many are longtime cronies. Many had major roles in politics before the 1968-78 decade of liberal reform under governors Francis W. Sargent and Dukakis. And all believe it's time for a return to a less activist past. Even King's token woman, Consumer Affairs Secretary Eileen Schell, repudiated the legislative agenda of her advisory counsel, declaring that her role is not that of consumer advocate, but of regulator and facilitator for business.

King won the November election by 10 percentage points, nearly a landslide, over a liberal Republican who had the open or tacit support of most liberal Democrats. He took office at a time when the Massachusetts legislature, always retrograde, had reached its depths. The Senate president and Ways and Means chairman had escaped indictment for taking illegal corporate contributions only because the statute of limitations had expired. The Senate majority leader and assistant minority leader had gone to jail. House Speaker Thomas W. McGee had redistricted the House, in the course of a one-third membership cut, to eliminate most of his reformist opponents, and had reaffirmed his policy of rarely talking to the press. The self-proclaimed "liberal hope" in the six-to-one Democratic legislature was the Senate's mildly environmentalist president-elect, William Bulger of South Boston, who is also a race-baiting anti-busing leader. The state treasurer was overwhelmingly reelected in November after two years of federal grand jury investigation.

Dukakis's lieutenant governor, Thomas P. O'Neill III, son of US Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, was renominated and reelected in 1978. On occasion he has stood up to King. The new governor has retaliated by putting O'Neill in political limbo, withdrawing his job as the state's chief lobbyist in Washington and ending his role as "Mr. Outside," the state executive's liaison to liberals and interest groups.

At the beginning of his governorship, Eddie King had nearly complete control. Half a year later, he seems to have lost it. Polls show his favorability rating below 50 percent. His main legislative drive—to raise the drinking age and to freeze local government spending and taxes—have been amended and diminished by a restrictive legislature. Several of his appointees have been humiliated, and some forced to resign, because of revelations that they had falsified their resumes, consorted with criminals, invested in dubious businesses or circumvented financial disclosure rules.

The insurance commissioner quit after admitting he lied about his real estate partnership with a convicted arsonist. A public works official was demoted after journalists discovered he had been criminally delinquent in paying taxes. A metropolitan district commissioner—overseeing water, parks, lands and a police force—stepped down as the *Boston Globe* started publishing a series alleging his involvement in the murder of a dissident union official. Less grave, but equally embarrassing, were revelations, within a week of each other, that the new head of mass transit did not have the engineering degree he claimed, and that the state officer in charge of programs for the elderly had been claiming degrees from fictitious divisions of Oxford and Heidelberg and actually was a high school dropout.

King has downgraded or terminated the appointments of people he regards as insufficiently loyal. Time and again in office he has derided the competence of Dukakis's transportation secretary, Frederick Salvucci, who as a Boston city official had orchestrated community opposition to airplane noise at Massport. King maneuvered the executive council, a separately elected body, into denying a judgeship to Herbert Hershfang, apparently because Hershfang's wife Ann

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Correspondence

Trustworthy, helpful, courteous and kind

To the editors:

The article by Paul Fussell in defense of the Boy Scouts ("Me Decade Antidote," *TNR*, May 19) brought memories to me of 1938 when we immigrated to the US. I was not only pleased, but relieved when my son, who had joined the Boy Scouts, showed me their slogans: "A Scout is trustworthy, a Scout is helpful, a Scout is courteous, a Scout is kind." You can't very well say that the *Hitlerjugend* aped it, since their slogans were: "Quick like the Greyhounds, tough as leather, hard as Kruppsteel" ("*Flink wie die Windhunde, zaeh wie Leder, hart wie Kruppstahl*") and these slogans were even applied to the little fellows, 10 years old, in the *Jungvolk*.

Franziska Toennies Heberle
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Brown v. Board

To the editors:

Contrary to Diane Ravitch's opinion, the meaning of *Brown* v. *Board* ("Color-Blind or Color-Conscious?," *TNR*, May 5) was not that people shall be classified in all cases on the basis of their race; it was that blacks (at least) shall not be denied equal protection of the laws. *Brown* also said that a racial classification erected in law must have a "necessary relation to a valid state objective." Much current remedial practice is absolutely crucial to one such objective—the survival of large population segments in a competitive society.

Appeals (by Ravitch) to the complexity of the issues and to the good will of all disputants deflect us from the values of the 14th Amendment, including the equal *protection* of "the laws." The phrase means no less than protection by the system, and by the institutional agents which may be found ready to insure survival and adequacy. For as it is true that "the laws" are the henchmen of the dominant political economic arrangement, so also is it true that the 14th Amendment reflects our desire that de facto and de jure segments not perish while some (within all races) greatly advance.

Ravitch sees "conflict" if this adjustment is made. She also sees people surviving solely by personal effort. To this the reply is that there is always a systemic component; those who have much create scarcity for others, even allowing for system-building through incentives. Systems allow great wealth, producing scarcity and conflict; actors in vision-positions must ease the edge of this.

The values argument is not secondary, as the Ravitch "intent" argument isn't even a push. The idea that the *dimension* of race, rather than the black location on that dimension, was at the heart of the 14th Amendment framers is quite strained. It is rather as if I were thought to say I wanted all weather climate control in my current locale, when what I want, from a survival standpoint even in early May, is a heater!

R. Christopher Perry
Instructor, Constitutional Law
University of Minnesota
Duluth, Minnesota

Underpinning of democracy

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley is entirely too sanguine about *Herbert* v. *Lando* ("Journalists' Privilege," *TNR*, May 12). In emphatically affirming a libel plaintiff's power to probe the editorial mind without even proving that the alleged libel was false, the Court pointedly endorsed a practice that can be exploited by public officials to discourage criticism and stifle debate. It is elementary that the press requires protection from judicial procedures that can be so exploited. Because the First Amendment is the underpinning of democracy, the media's alarm is justified.

David H. Remes
Boston, Massachusetts

The uses and misuses of federal tax money

To the editors:

TNR's editorial headed "Cultural Imperialism" (April 21) in four different places states that federal tax money would be used to buy the Stuart portraits of George and Martha Washington. The *Washington Post* has quoted the Director of the National Portrait Gallery as saying explicitly that tax money would *not* be so used.

The editorial creates the impression that residents of the District of Columbia face neither the problems of deteriorating parks, early closings of libraries and inadequate funds, etc., or the problem of paying for more than a small fraction of these "traditional city services." Perhaps the members of *TNR* staff are accustomed to using only the Library of Congress, but most of us residents of the District use the city library system; our branch library is closed entirely on two days of the week. On the two days it is open until nine at night it is shut in the morning, and on the three days it is open during the day (9:30-5:30) it is shut at night. The entire second floor of our branch library, intended for the use of children, has been closed for the past several years because of lack of staff. Book money is so scarce that all new books are cased in heavy plastic covers to make them last longer.

Many of the parks most heavily used by the city's children are the city's funding responsibility. Last summer many of the city's swimming pools and other park facilities were on sharply curtailed use hours because of lack of funds for staffing the city recreational programs. Before the city attained partial home rule a few years ago, the Congress kindly provided us with a large stadium to be paid for by local taxes if it didn't make enough to pay the bills. It is used by a football team whose headquarters, practice fields, etc., are all outside the city. Congress also over the years generously exempted from local property taxes a substantial percentage of property not federally owned, and saddled the city with an over-generous retirement system (unfunded), a majority of whose beneficiaries through the years were non-residents of the city.

Our city university is scattered over a score of deteriorated rented buildings. While the site for its proposed new campus has been cleared for years, the cost of building goes up sharply every year, and the city has been eager to build, with its own money, for years—but can't because Congress has "vested" veto power in a single member of the US Senate.

It is true that Washington has many "attractions" which have been provided primarily by federal tax funds or by private givers with a particular interest in the nation's capital, as such. But for the many thousands of its residents who live here, pay taxes here, have no voting

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

representation of any kind or description in Congress, and who can't tax those who regularly use our streets and earn their living here, it's not exactly Imperial Rome!

Russell I. Thackrey
Washington, DC

Financial dogs

To the editors:

Lester Thurow's piece on conglomerate mergers misses the mark ("Bigness and Badness," *TNR*, April 28). Senator Kennedy's antitrust bill to stop mergers between large corporations is probably a poor method to achieve a good goal. But to jump from Senator Kennedy's bill to dampen the number of conglomerate mergers to the conclusion that conglomerate mergers would increase economic efficiency in the US economy requires an incredible leap of faith and considerable ignorance of mergers and their impact.

Senator Kennedy's bill attempts to address the problem of power in American industry. Since the end of World War II, there has been a dramatic increase in the share of US industry controlled by a few corporations—and much of that move toward centralization of industry can be traced to the gigantic post-war merger wave (1954-70). In 1976 the largest 466 manufacturing corporations owned 71 percent of all manufacturing assets and earned 72 percent of all net (after tax) profits in that sector. In the economy as a whole the richest 0.2 percent of corporations (only 3800 in 1974) owned 72 percent of all corporate assets, produced 52 percent of sales and earned 69 percent of corporate profits. In an economy as large as that of the United States, this reflects a significant concentration of economic power. In fact, listing numbers does not do justice to the problem. Only when viewed as a whole set of problems, from rising concentration to price fixing cartels to interlocking corporate and governmental directorates, does it become clear that the greatest problem of centralized power is not in government but in industry.

Thurow's list of the benefits of conglomerate mergers is illusory. Merging firms do not improve the allocation of investment funds. The giant conglomerates of the 1960s have, in general, been the financial dogs of the 1970s. Conglomerate managers' abilities to substitute bureaucratic decision-making for the marketplace in the area of investment is appealing to managers but has *no* advantages for economic efficiency or for the consumer or worker. Conglomerate firms do not engage in mergers as part of a corporate strategy of "replacing inefficient managers with efficient managers."

Historically, mergers have benefitted two groups: (1) the financial manager who puts the two firms together and makes considerable money in the process and (2) the corporate managers whose empire of jobs, output and reciprocal trading has expanded.

Section 7 of the Clayton Antitrust Act has done an admirable job of slowing mergers between competitors and between producers and suppliers. Only the loophole of conglomerate mergers allows the race toward corporate centralization to continue unchecked. Senator Kennedy's bill is not the best solution but it is a move in the right direction.

David H. Ciscel
Department of Economics
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee

Inter-city buses are the taxpayer's best friend

To the editors:

Thank you for your excellent lead article of April 21, "A Subsidy for Sentiment."

You have most dearly stated the strong arguments against this unfair practice—this tremendous waste of my tax dollars.

You underscore the fact that inter-city buses, with their lack of subsidy, fuel-efficiency, and low level of emissions, are overwhelmingly the government's and the taxpayer's best friend.

James M. Rivers
Greyhound driver
Chicago, Illinois

Contributing to literacy

To the editors:

Thank you of the *New Republic* for your contribution to my literacy. I have read *TNR* since my university graduation in 1965. Only for the two years while we were in the Peace Corps did we not subscribe. It was difficult and expensive to get *TNR* in Africa so we had to make do with *Time*, overseas edition, which served adequately also as toilet paper.

I have read *TNR* over the years through thick and thin. Thinnest, I believe, was when I read each issue in the middle of the night by the light of one bulb while nursing a baby with the other hand. It seemed that the only other reading I did during those times was billboards and road signs while driving to the grocery store and pediatrician.

A few years ago I began to feel that I could comfortably express myself in the English language and that *TNR* has been important in my continuing education. On this, my 36th birthday, I thank you very much for your contribution to the process of educating us, and I note that the small maps you have been placing in recent issues are appropriate to this task.

Christine Mann Bittker
Paradise Valley, Arizona

Equivocations

To the editors:

I can empathize with Michael Kinsley's equivocations about hiring someone to clean his dirt, and I'm charmed by the image of *TNR*'s managing editor scrubbing his own kitchen floor (Washington Diarist, *TNR*, May 19). Unfortunately I can't share his equivocations about nuclear power, a really Rube Goldberg way to boil water. Equivocations I once had were dispelled by extensive reading on the subject—contrary to the picture often painted of nuclear opponents as hysterics who are fearful of something they don't understand.

Perhaps *TNR*'s editors could read more about nuclear technology (e.g. Helen Caldicott's "Nuclear Madness") and alternatives (e.g. Barry Commoner's "Solar Transition" in the *New Yorker*, April 23 and 30), even opening up your own pages to such articles as antidotes to the ill-tempered comments of John Osborne about anti-nuclear "crums."

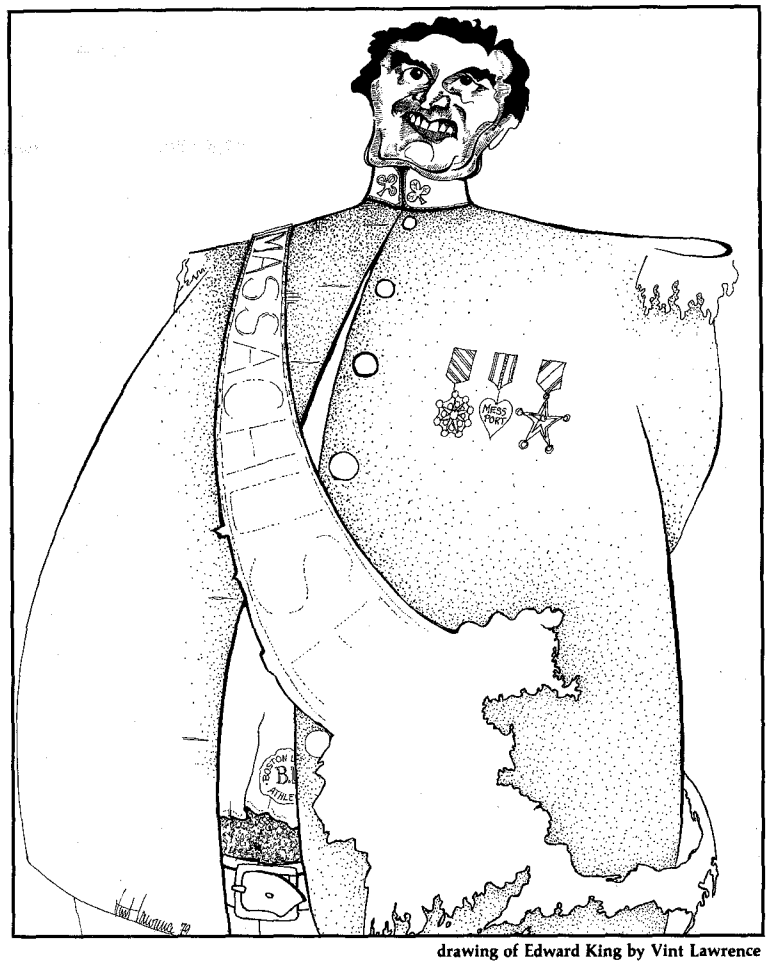
Ann Morrissett Davidon
Haverford, Pennsylvania

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced and held to under 200 words.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was among the Massport commissioners who fired King as executive director in 1974. An ardent anti-feminist, King sacked the whole government's commission on the status of women. He denied state appointment to an unsuccessful congressional candidate, later a key King campaign aide, Margaret Dinneen, because she was "too soft" on abortion.

If King were as adroit at legislating as the great demagogic governors such as Huey Long, he might have been able to win public approval for his autocracy. Instead, in the aftermath of Proposition 13, in the state with the second or third highest property taxes in America, he failed to keep his principal campaign promise of freezing property taxes. During the campaign and afterward, King juggled his state budget revenue and expenditure predictions many times, in an attempt to maintain the plausibility of a promised "$500-million tax cut." In the process, he had destroyed the reputation for candor that his sniping at opponents had gained him. This juggling also has provided the ammunition, and perhaps the theme, for a challenger in the next election—just as Dukakis's ill-advised duplicitous pledge of "no new state taxes" in 1974, followed by the biggest tax increase in state history in 1975, provided the ammunition for King in 1978.



drawing of Edward King by Vint Lawrence

King's campaign in the Democratic primary was destructive and trivial. In a televised debate among the three Democratic candidates (Dukakis, King and liberal former Cambridge mayor Barbara Ackermann), King made no attempt to answer questions or respond to his opponents. He just recited over and over his litany of hate about drunk teenage drivers, criminals going free, abortion, welfare. On primary night one of his closest aides said King had "put all the hate groups in one pot and let them boil." The remark was reprinted widely. King later repudiated it and said the reporter was lying.

In the general election campaign, King tried to appear more positive. He started stressing his $500-million tax "plan." Less than a month later King's people admitted they had chosen the $500-million figure because it sounded good, then cast about for program changes and plausible income estimates. After that story was reported, King said again that the press had lied.

Throughout the campaign King struggled to make himself seem constructive, pledging welfare reform (as devised by Ronald Reagan's former welfare expert, Robert Carlson), administrative efficiency and—as the cornerstone of his plan for Massachusetts—a freeze on local government spending, whether elected local officials wanted one or not. King was forced to put the onus on local government because, like any conservative eastern Democrat, he depended on labor unions, including public employee unions, for money and manpower. He promised not to repeal or amend collective bargaining for state employees or final and binding arbitration for local employees. He supported cost-of-living increases for public employees and a large raise for the state police. He needed new jobs in civil service to reward campaign workers. Unless he could freeze local spending, he could keep his promise of reducing local property taxes only by increasing state aid to local governments, which the state could not afford.

So King proposed during the campaign, and duly filed after his inauguration, legislation to "cap" city and town budgets. Gradually he had to allow some exceptions: a two-thirds vote of local officials or the town meeting could lift the cap; mandated pension and debt service would be excluded from the freeze; special circumstances could be reviewed by the legislature. Despite these exceptions local officials—including the most conservative Republicans—exploded. They were competent to run their towns, they said. They had local support for any expenditure. If local citizens were unhappy, they could vote out their town officials more easily than a runaway state legislature.

The Democratic legislature dawdled over King's bill, debated and finally offered King a four percent limit on local budget increases instead of a freeze. King dickered for nine of the constitutional limit of 10 days, then signed it. Even so, he announced—with yet another set of numbers as evidence—that the diluted bill would produce a $500-million tax cut. Well, not a cut, exactly. But $500 million less collected in taxes than there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would have been if King's legislation hadn't existed. This calculation included some wishful thinking. Maybe there would be more federal revenue sharing (though all indications are for less). There might be less welfare expense (though Carlson and most of his proposed reforms have long since disappeared). There might be more income tax revenues from individuals and businesses, based on a sort of corporate Laffer curve prediction that ending long-standing taxes on insurance companies would bring in more money, not less. King said he was ending the insurance taxes so companies wouldn't leave the state. But the companies had been threatening to leave, without doing anything, for half a dozen years. Similarly, King pledged tax and other concessions to computer and electronics companies if they stayed and expanded in Massachusetts.

King's proposed state budget, heavily reworked by the legislature, was a combination of vengefulness and sleight-of-hand. He cut the appropriation for welfare without reducing the benefit levels, except to veto a cost-of-living increase. State analysts said privately King would have to come to the legislature late in the fiscal year, as had most governors before him, seeking a supplementary budget. He saved a meaningless million dollars by cutting a third of the appropriation of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts, which Dukakis, married to a dance teacher and son-in-law of a symphony violinist, had let grow. King arranged to increase tuition at state colleges and the university, while cutting the higher education appropriation in the state budget.

King has been written off as inept and probably unreelectable by the local press. But he believes, with some justice, that he retains the support of the blue-collar voters in Massachusetts's urban three decker houses. In the last campaign, he played to their traditional class hatred, more fierce in Massachusetts than nearly anywhere else, by showing campaign spots of the opponent's secluded estate in the country and his own commodious but ordinary place on a crowded Winthrop city street. He didn't reveal that he had earned $100,000-plus as a business lobbyist and consultant in the years after he left Massport, and that he has declined to say which companies paid him. Officials of his administration are complying, minimally, with state financial disclosure laws, but King had refused to allocate funds to hire investigators at the state agency charged with receiving and verifying the reports. King's real constituents, the governor says, admire self-made men and resent government snoops.

No one has suggested publicly that King has anything to hide. A few of his friends have unsavory business reputations, and several of his appointees were proved or suspected to have criminal associations, but King himself is depicted by sympathetic Boston College classmates as another Ulysses S. Grant or Warren Harding, honest but unable to discipline those around him, unwilling to say no to a friend.

He is an arrogant man in public, but is reportedly kind and loyal in private. Having run up a substantial surplus in his campaign budget, he gave away several thousand dollars of the remainder to medical charities and to trust funds for the children of a state trooper who died on duty. The gifts were disclosed by law but not elaborately publicized by King. He works nights and weekends (and expects his staff to do the same) yet dutifully attends mass and visits his mother. Although friends say he fantasizes about the presidency, he has shown little inclination to involve himself in national party activities. Despite his calls for tax cuts he gives no support to Jerry Brown or to a constitutional amendment for a balanced budget. He says little about Ted Kennedy; he blandly and routinely supports Jimmy Carter. He shows no interest in national defense.

King seeks a return to a simpler time when business did business, welfare was charity, government built highways, and voting reflected religion and class. He is a workingman's Democrat in league with big business. He does not lead, he does not inspire: he represents. After two decades of Kennedys and Careys, Ed King has offered himself to Massachusetts's Irish Catholics as someone who is really "one of us."

William A. Henry III

William A. Henry III writes for the *Boston Globe.*

The legacy of Talcott Parsons.

Sociology for Liberals

Talcott Parsons died in Munich last month, after a conference honoring the dissertation he had completed in Heidelberg 50 years before. When he went from America to Germany as a young man in the 1920s, he was going from the outskirts to the center of the sociological world. When he returned to Germany at the age of 76, he himself was the central figure in modern sociology, now widely recognized as a particularly American discipline. Yet for the last decade of his life Parsons was the object of intense intellectual and political vilification. He was the most profound American social scientist of this century. But he was also one of the most maligned, and certainly one of the least understood.

Parsons dominated post-war sociology, during a time when his discipline became the intellectual linchpin for the other social sciences. American sociology had flourished in the earlier part of this century as an empirical and ethnographic version of progressive thought. But it was Europe that produced the great theorists who laid the foundations for sociology as a systematic field. Through his translations and through

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enormously powerful interpretive works, Parsons brought the ideas of these French and German thinkers—particularly Emile Durkheim and Max Weber—into the mainstream of American thought. By the early 1950s he had transformed this classical inheritance into a powerful new language that provided the basis for future discussion. This language, called "structural-functionalism," spread to every social science discipline and to sociologists in every nation, capitalist and communist, developed and developing. Henceforth, all debate has related to the conceptual framework that Parsons had laid out.

Parsons's writing often was obscure and unnecessarily abstract, but the basic ideas of structural-functional theory are clear enough. Parsons insisted, first, that societies are systems. Every institution is highly interdependent with every other; the part can be understood only in relation to the whole. Moreover, when millions of individual decisions are aggregated, the aggregation assumes a logic of its own: "systems" make demands that actors can never fully understand. In a complex society it is impossible for any single individual or elite to direct social life in a completely self-conscious way. Classes, political elites, institutions—all act in the context of larger, often opaque system demands.

When Parsons filled in this structural-functional model, he insisted that values were as important as material interests. His synthesis of the two was his second great accomplishment. He combined the German emphasis on spirit and French thinking about the state with the Anglo-American focus on the individual and his material environment. A key part of this strategy was Parsons's effort to bring Freud into sociological theory. Motivation, he realized, was central to any social order, whether that order is ostensibly purely coercive or apparently totally free. Social systems nurture motivation. Through the complicated process called socialization, and through vigilant efforts at delicate social control, societies try to integrate the individual personality with the normative order.

Parsons conceived of himself as a scientist, and he developed this structural-functional theory as a mode of explanation. In this effort he was quite successful. Sociologists applied the theory to all sorts of institutions, from the family and school to the nation-state; to every conceivable historical period; to revolution and to fascism as well.

Yet beneath this scientific claim, great as it was, a deeper ambition fueled Parsons's incurable theorizing. The secret was this: Parsons loved American society, perhaps not as much for itself as for the ideal it symbolized. He wanted to know why this liberal order worked, and why it didn't. His theory, despite its abstract trappings and "systems" orientation, was really dedicated to the individual, to the task of preserving autonomy and pluralism in the overbearing world of industrial society.

But Parsons did not share the typical American vision of individualism: the laissez-faire individual standing alone without social support, the utilitarian individual bargaining for his just reward, the pragmatic individual finding truth on his own terms. Parsons's individual was, rather, the individual in community, sustained by the mutual obligations of his society and by shared cultural values. But not just any cultural values will do: they must be universalistic commitments—the kind that are transcendent, not limited to any particular social institution or group. These values will produce critical action and reform, and will not reinforce the organic unity of a static society.

But individualism also demands a certain kind of social structure, one where the institutions are relatively independent of each other, free to develop their own resources in a powerful way. This independence must be carefully monitored by government regulation, and it must be undergirded by ties of civic solidarity of which the legal system is only the most visible manifestation.

Individualism and pluralism were to Parsons fundamental achievements of world history, yet to him they were still fragile blossoms. If resources were distributed too unevenly, the very pluralization of institutions would create disorder and eventually civil war. Healthy pluralistic conflict, moreover, could become polarized if basic values were not shared, if civil solidarity became narrow and particularistic. Such dangers are particularly acute in periods of rapid social change, when "vanguard" cultures of the left and "backlash" cultures of the right create vicious circles of reform and reaction. Parsons stressed that trust is the unconscious resource of every social system. When trust breaks down, even for the noblest reasons, societies are in deep trouble.

The path to individual autonomy, in Parsons's view, was equally perilous. Independence demands a vast network of internal controls, controls which are established only through the excruciatingly long process of socialization. Because this process makes heavy demands on the individual for self-denial, alienation is endemic. Parsons predicted that expressive and particularistic "counter-cultures" would develop at every stage of this socialization process, and he was afraid that the very process of learning to be rational would produce the conditions for its suppression.

From the beginning Parsons's functionalist theorizing was strenuously opposed by the positivistic tradition in sociology. Many sociologists misperceive natural science as resting upon purely factual propositions unhindered by abstract speculation. Advocates of this positivist persuasion would like to rely on the supposedly more objective technical apparatus of sociology—on surveys, computers and on the mathematical manipulation of data—rather than on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

philosophically informed analytic frameworks. Eventually, this methodological fetishism became the order of the day in American sociology, and Parsons's theorizing was increasingly dismissed as too general, too abstract, too distant from the "real world." Ironically, many humanists arrived at a similar criticism from the opposite direction, rejecting Parsons's theory as overly technical and scientistic.

In the 1960s these critics were joined by critics from the new left. In part, this was a straightforward political struggle. Parsons never was a knee-jerk patriot—he was a Stevenson loyalist and was deemed a security risk in the McCarthy era—but he defended the basic structure of American society. In the crucible of the 1960s, the left was in no mood to appreciate the subtleties of this grand theorist of the liberal order. Yet there were deeper reasons for this dispute which are more disturbing. The radical vision in America has too often been rooted in a utilitarian and individualistic framework that mirrors the values of the society it critiques. It has insisted that an emphasis on values means an endorsement of homogeneity, that socialization means conformity, that system regulation means totalitarian control. These were the very misconceptions against which Parsons directed his work.

For positivist and progressive thinkers, then, Parsons came to symbolize all that was wrong with American sociology and society. In an orgy of patricide, Parsonian theory was repeatedly killed and laid to rest. This murder became ritualized, repeated at national conferences and in the articles of respected journals. To be a "Parsonian" became a sign of intellectual leprosy, a term of opprobrium to be even more carefully avoided than the political designation "liberal," a connection not completely fortuitous.

Parsons was a funny kind of liberal because he eschewed the polemical mode of social criticism. It was not simply his love for American society or his self-conscious effort to create a sociological theory neither Marxist nor conservative. There was, in addition to all this, his surprising personal diffidence. He not only abstained from sharp criticism of American society, he also never really defended himself against the mounting intellectual and political attacks on his work. Unlike most sociologists, Parsons did not enjoy a good fight. Now he is gone. But his theory remains and is worth defending, for it is a vital if misunderstood legacy to liberal thought.

Jeffrey C. Alexander

Jeffrey C. Alexander is the author of *Theoretical Logic in Sociology* (University of California Press) and teaches sociology at UCLA.

Shared hatred of Israel was all that kept the Arab nations off one another's throats.

The War Against Sadat

by Morton Kondracke

In adversity as in triumph, Anwar Sadat acts the part of the epic hero, the stuff of legends. He casts himself as the embodiment of Egypt, and his projects as the fulfillment of the historic aspirations of the Egyptian people. He displays a grand arrogance which may prove to be hubris, but the gods have not destroyed him yet. He dreams, acts and risks like a figure out of mythology. He made a war to restore his people's pride, and then decided to make peace in spite of the fact that Arabs and Israelis were still mired in enmity and suspicion. When all other leaders—Israeli, Arab and American—seemed too petty-minded for the task, he overwhelmed them by the force of his own daring: daring to travel to Jerusalem, daring to conclude an agreement with Israel that his brother Arabs called betrayal. Now he is ostracized, reviled and threatened with assassination, but he responds with a magnificent scorn. "The dogs can bark," he says of the Arabs who hate him, "but they can't stop the caravan from moving."

Sadat talks as if his plans are what destiny has in store, but for the short term, at least, he seems to have led Egypt's caravan into a parched desert. It seems to be a more forbidding environment than Sadat expected, and appears likely to get even drier and more hostile before an oasis comes into view, if one ever does. By agreement at Baghdad, 18 of Egypt's 21 fellow members of the Arab league have broken off diplomatic relations in retaliation for Sadat's peace treaty with Israel. These 18 include such Western-tilting friends as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No More Free Ride... For Union Officials.

Thanks to Harry Beck, American workers no longer have to support unwanted candidates or undesired political causes to keep their jobs.

Harry, who was born and grew up in LaPlata, Maryland, has worked for the telephone company for 19 years. He once belonged to the Communications Workers of America union, but resigned "because the CWA was totally impersonal to anyone except those at the top."

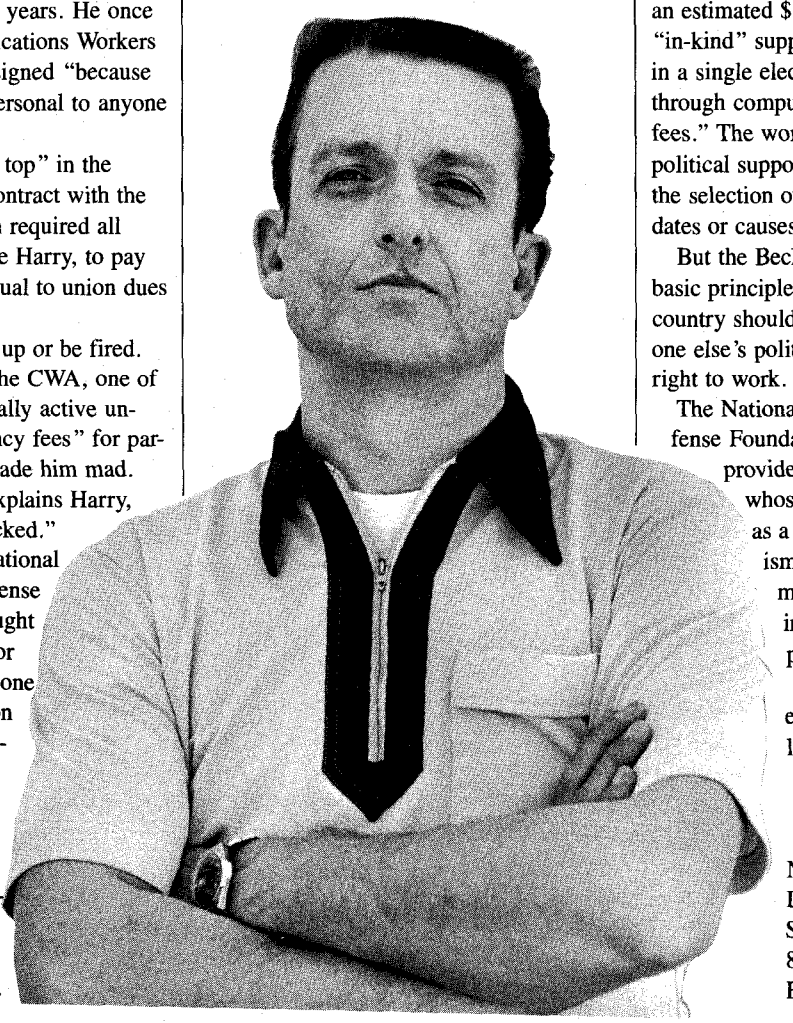
However, "those at the top" in the union then negotiated a contract with the telephone company which required all non-union employees, like Harry, to pay CWA an "agency fee" equal to union dues to stay employed.

Harry Beck had to pay up or be fired. But then he learned that the CWA, one of the country's most politically active unions, was using the "agency fees" for partisan politics—and that made him mad. "They backed people," explains Harry, "I just wouldn't have backed."

With the help of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, suit was brought against the CWA union for Harry and 19 other telephone company workers. And on March 16, 1979, in an historic decision, a Federal court ruled that a union's collecting or spending of compulsory fees for any purpose other than collective bargaining violates the Constitutional rights of employees who object.

It was the first time that a Federal court had declared that union political spending from mandatory "agency fees" is an infringement upon the rights to free speech and association enjoyed by private sector workers.

Similar protection was established for public employees last year in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*—another case supported by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation.



The potential impact of the two decisions is enormous. Union officials spend an estimated $100 million in direct and "in-kind" support on political campaigns in a single election year—most of it raised through compulsory dues or "agency fees." The workers forced to pay for this political support have rarely any voice in the selection of the union favored candidates or causes.

But the Beck decision reaffirms the basic principle that no worker in a free country should ever have to support anyone else's politics in order to retain his right to work.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, established in 1968, provides free legal aid to workers whose rights have been violated as a result of compulsory unionism. It is presently supporting more than 100 court cases involving the rights of employees across the nation.

If you'd like to help workers like Harry Beck, we'd like to hear from you.

National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation
Suite 600
8316 Arlington Blvd.
Fairfax, Virginia 22038

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Morocco and Tunisia. Only Oman, the Sudan and Somali have stuck by Sadat, and there are doubts whether the Sudan can hang in. Egypt also has been expelled from the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries. The Arab Civil Aviation Council has voted to bar Egypt's national airline from Arab airspace and cut off flights to Egypt. More important in this era of resurgent Moslem fundamentalism, Egypt has been excluded from Islamic summit conferences in retaliation for Sadat's failure to secure Arab control of Jerusalem.

The Arabs are squeezing Sadat economically as well as politically. The Baghdad summit called for an end to all Arab financial aid to and investment in Egypt, an oil embargo, cancellation of all joint ventures with the Egyptian government and a boycott of private Egyptian companies that deal with Israel. Estimates of Arab aid to Egypt vary from $350 million to two billion dollars a year, so it's not clear whether the cutoff is a bee sting or a hammer blow to the Egyptian economy. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have threatened to pull out about two billion dollars on deposit in Egyptian banks. Egypt wouldn't and couldn't let the money out of the country, but that might affect its credit ratings. Saudi Arabia has announced it is pulling out the Arab Organization for Industrialization, a giant arms-building enterprise located in Egypt. This may cause the closing of factories and unemployment for 10,000 skilled and semi-skilled workers. The Saudis also are threatening not to pay, as they promised, $465 million owed to the United States for Egypt's purchase of 50 F-5E fighter airplanes.

But for all the abuse and punishment that the Arabs are dishing out to Sadat and his nation, their most potent weapons have not been employed. There has been no violence against Egyptian embassies, airlines or citizens. The Arab countries still are allowing Egyptian guest workers to send home remittances that amount to two billion dollars a year. The reason for this seems to be that Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states need their Egyptian middle managers too much to risk losing them in the war against Sadat. And they must suspect that violence against Egyptians would only solidify Sadat's support among his countrymen.

The Arabs probably are not unified about how far to go in punishing Sadat. Libya, South Yemen, Iraq and elements of the PLO probably would shoot him tomorrow if they could. Perhaps Syria would, too. But the aim of Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf states and Jordan seems to be to make Sadat regret his transgressions, but not to destroy him. The "moderate" rejectionists presumably still hope that Sadat will see the error of his ways and will either resign from office, delivering leadership to another moderate of his stripe, or will return himself to the Arab fold. This seems a vain hope, given Sadat's stubborn adherence to his own aims. The danger is that his resolve and his rhetoric will strengthen the hand of radicals counseling ultra-extreme measures against Egypt.

The Arab countries have both individual and shared reasons for ganging up against Sadat. He has taken the most populous and militarily powerful nation in the Arab world out of confrontation with Israel. For all practical purposes, this eliminates any Arab option to force Israel into submission by starting a war. Some Arabs fear Israel now can attack them at will. Others think Israel now can't be forced to go back to its 1967 borders and give the Palestinians a state of their own. The most radical elements now have to give up their dreams of driving Israel into the sea, or at least they have to for as long as Anwar Sadat rules in Egypt.

There is also a tribal element to the Arab outrage against Sadat. The Arab states do not love one another very much. Two years ago, Iraq tried to assassinate the Syrian foreign minister in Abu Dhabi. Last year, Syrians and Palestinians were butchering one another in Lebanon. Other Arabs were shooting it out in the streets of Paris. King Hussein has been a perennial target of Arab assassins. But the Arabs always could join forces against Israel in the name of the Pan-Arab ideal, the mythical One Arab Nation. Now Sadat has left his brothers and consorted with the enemy. He got his own country's land back, but not Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the other missing parts of the Arab nation. He committed a betrayal and a dishonor, almost an act against nature.

The key parties in the rejectionist front—Iraq and Syria—have particular national reasons for working to undermine Sadat. US intelligence reports indicate that leaders of both countries feared powerful pro-peace sentiment would develop internally unless Sadat were discredited. The regimes in both countries are unrepresentative of the population and need to use fear and prejudice to maintain power. Both countries are under Soviet influence, which is being employed to upset the Egypt-Israel peace effort. Syria fancies itself the proper leader of the Arab world and feels a special rivalry with Egypt. Syria's President Assad never has forgiven Sadat for reaching a cease-fire with Israel in the 1973 war while fighting continued in the Golan Heights.

Sadat has accused Saudi Arabia of buying and leading the opposition against him, but most Arabs and US Arab-watchers say the Saudis are only paying, while following the lead of Syria and Iraq. The Saudis *are* angry at Sadat, though, and also at the United States. They feel Sadat did not consult them about his peace moves, did nothing to get Holy Jerusalem back for the Arabs and abandoned the cause of the Palestinians. The Saudis, their friends say, fear Palestinian sabotage and subversion within their borders, but also believe in the justice of Palestinian aspirations for nationhood.

Saudi Arabia's cleaving to the Pan-Arab cause is part of its movement away from the United States. The Saudis are said to deeply resent the treatment they have received from the United States. Saudis also fear

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the US is neither smart enough nor strong enough any longer to be a reliable protector of our own interests or theirs. They feel that President Carter promised them he would work for a comprehensive Mideast peace, but actually delivered only a destabilizing separate agreement between Egypt and Israel.

The Saudis also feel the US has been unwisely and undiplomatically trying to force them into conformity with the aims of the Carter administration. On the final day of his Middle East peace shuttle in March, according to well-placed US sources, President Carter called in US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia John West for a conference in Cairo. Carter reportedly told West: I want you to tell the Saudis in no uncertain terms that if they do not support this treaty, the special relationship is off between the United States and Saudi Arabia. When West protested that the US derives as much from the special relationship as the Saudis do, the president repeated his order. West duly returned to Saudi Arabia and did as he was told, angering and disturbing the Saudis so much that Carter had to send his son, Chip, national security adviser Brzezinski and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to smooth things over. Brzezinski reportedly did not repeat Carter's threat.

The Saudis also complain that the US is trying to destabilize their regime by spreading reports of disunity within the royal family. They are disturbed by public discussion of possible US military action to "protect" (or seize) Saudi oil fields, and by proposals to equip Egypt (or Israel and Egypt together) to replace Iran as the Middle East's regional police force. It's been reported that the Saudis asked for removal of the CIA station chief in their country; what's not been reported is that this followed CIA efforts to learn how many Shi'ite Moslems live near the Gulf Coast oil fields. The Saudis claim not to be sure whether the agency was checking on possible subversives, or recruiting them.

Apparently, important divisions do exist within the Saudi ruling hierarchy, especially over the extent to which Saudi Arabia should increase oil production and hold down prices to suit the United States. Conservationists, many educated in the United States, seem to be winning out. At the same time, the Saudis seem intent on demonstrating independence by starting to sell oil abroad through their own petroleum ministry, rather than through the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco). Some experts say sales have been made to Spain, Greece and Syria already, and they would not be surprised if the Saudis soon began selling to Romania—or even Soviet satellite Bulgaria.

Other members of the Baghdad rejection front have their particular reasons for joining, too. King Hussein, once a pariah among the Arabs, has found a niche as a respected Arab leader. Amman is becoming prosperous as an Arab trading and conference center because of the destruction of Beirut. And the Saudis are now taking on America's old role as filler of Hussein's personal and national beggar's cup. Morocco, too, needs money, especially to pay for its war against Polisario guerrillas in the Sahara. The US is reluctant to provide weapons and money, and King Hassan apparently hopes good Arab behavior will open Saudi coffers.

How long can the Arab alliance against Sadat hold together? Not long, the Israelis, Egyptians and American officials are inclined to think. "Probably it will continue for the remainder of this year," said one US expert, "but the half-life of coalitions like this usually isn't much longer than a year." Once the current wave of emotionalism is over, according to this theory, inherent conflicts between the Arab parties will reappear, and the front will crack. Israelis say this is a good reason for their own government to stand firm against demands for concessions to West Bank Arabs. Once the Arabs realize they can get nothing through pressure and hostility, Israelis say, the nations will break ranks and natural moderates may decide to negotiate in their own national interests.

Non-Egyptian Arabs claim that the front will hold. They say it is built around just demands that really are moderate, if the West would only look at them. Sadat was condemned at Baghdad, they say, not for making peace, but for agreeing to *not enough peace*—for making a separate peace, rather than a comprehensive one. The Arabs also claim that the Islamic revolution in Iran, while no Arab undertaking, has strengthened the ties that bind the Moslem countries in the region. The Iranian revolution also weakened US influence, causing Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states to look to their Arab neighbors for security and comfort, rather than to the Soviet Union.

The Carter administration and Egypt seem convinced that Sadat is capable of surviving Arab political and economic pressures in the short term. His peacemaking seems popular at home except among Moslem fanatics and leftist intellectuals, and Egypt's economy is buoyed by revenues from Suez canal traffic, Egyptian workers abroad, increased tourism and oil exports. American aid increases also will help, although some Middle East experts think the US should put more emphasis on quick, high-visibility aid projects such as city buses, wheat, chickens, street repairs, paint for buildings and tree plantings.

In the longer run, Sadat's survival and his place in history will depend on whether he can bring prosperity to his people and encourage a wider peace in the region. Domestically, he needs to reform the over-bureaucratized Egyptian economy and increase investments to feed, clothe and employ his burgeoning population. And, with US help, he has to convince Israel to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians that the region considers just. The other Arabs are angry that President Carter has enlisted Robert Strauss—"not just a Jew, but a Zionist"—to begin talking Israel into compromises, but Egyptians think Strauss is the right man to short-circuit election year pressures on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carter from the American Jewish community.

The United States should work to talk Israel out of provocative settlement-building and other actions (and words) that convince the Arabs of their worst fears about Israeli designs on the West Bank. And it should work on the Arabs to follow the visionary example of Anwar Sadat. Instead of trying to reach Egypt's goals by hostility and war, Sadat saw the efficacy of peace diplomacy, and it worked. It could work for the Syrians, Jordanians, Saudis and Palestinians, too.

It seems certain that Anwar Sadat already has made himself a legend. Future times will remember him, almost for sure, as a leader who rose above the fears and hatreds of his people, who grandly took risks to make peace and who was reviled and hated for it by his peers. The legend is not concluded, though. It is not decided whether Sadat is remembered as one who risked, failed and was destroyed, or as one who opened the way to real peace. How the legend ends depends on Sadat, of course, but also on Israel, the Arabs and us.

A dispatch from the academic front of the Middle East conflict.

War-Torn Georgetown

by Nicholas Lemann

Everybody who gives money to charitable institutions like universities is purchasing something that falls in the general category of good will. Institutions that rely on large contributors learn to accommodate and even, with varying degress of subtlety, encourage the feeling that donors are getting their money's worth. But sometimes such investments go sour. If there were a booby prize given for the most money spent to achieve the least amount of good will, the governments of Arab nations surely would win it for their contributions over the past few years to subsidize Middle East studies in United States universities. Whether the purpose of large gifts from Arab countries has been the kind of general good will that all generous donors want, or whether they are part of a nefarious scheme to purchase academic prestige for anti-Zionist propaganda (as critics allege), it is beyond dispute that so far these gifts have been a miserable public relations failure.

When the University of Southern California took one million dollars from the government of Saudi Arabia and made plans to set up a Middle East Center in which the donors apparently would have a say about who got hired, an enormous furor erupted. The faculty revolted, the American Jewish Committee chided USC, the press clucked disapprovingly and politicians made outraged speeches. Now plans for the Middle East Center are in shambles and USC's president, John R. Hubbard, is on the way out. MIT had to cancel an arrangement with the Saudis when it became clear that there would be no guarantee of non-discrimination against Jews. Swarthmore, Haverford and Bryn Mawr bowed out of a joint program in Arab studies because the prospective donor was under investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Here in Washington, the hardiest survivor of the new studies centers funded by Arab governments is plugging along at Georgetown University, but its brief life has been full of adversity. The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies opened its doors in 1975, the brainchild of Peter Krogh, the dean of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. It started with a $100,000 grant from the Sultanate of Oman and has picked up funding along the way from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as well as American corporations that do business with the Arabs, like Mobil and Citibank. What brought the center into public controversy was a $750,000 grant from the government of Libya for an endowed chair in Arab culture. Columnist Art Buchwald wrote that the grant was "blood money from one of the most notorious regimes in the world today." Georgetown was roundly criticized for accepting it.

Then, last summer, Georgetown University's president, Father Timothy Healy, returned a gift of $50,000 from the government of Iraq. This was a gift that the Arab Studies Center had solicited. Healy's stated reason for sending back the money will no doubt add to Georgetown's reputation for expertise in the art of diplomacy. Father Healy wrote the Iraqis that their contribution was unnecessary because, "between the

Nicholas Lemann is associate editor of *Texas Monthly* and a contributing editor of the *Washington Monthly*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time that the gift was sought from the government of Iraq and the time it was received, the University received a gift from another source guaranteeing the presence of a renowned Islamic ethician on its staff for the foreseeable future." This renowned ethician has yet to appear at Georgetown and it was widely assumed that Healy's real reason was discomfort with the politics of the donor and fear of another Libya-style controversy. Since that time, the American Jewish Committee issued a set of proposed guidelines for universities accepting foreign money, and Georgetown, miffed, is at work on a slightly different set of guidelines of its own.

These are the facts, but somehow they don't do justice to the true nature of the controversy. It's one of those situations where everyone is arguing passionately about one thing but what they really care about is another thing entirely. The stated subject of the dispute—academic standards, or, as *Commentary* recently put it, "the scholarly disinterestedness of the university"—is just a cover for the real subject, which is American public opinion about the Middle East. American universities are hungry these days and Arab nations are rich. Certainly part of the reason for the Arabs' recent generosity is that they hope to influence American opinion in their direction. Most of the people who are upset about the grants are upset because they think that mission will be accomplished, to the peril of Israel.

So in the case of the Georgetown center, instead of duking it out directly, people argue about objectivity, standards and even more arcane matters. One controversy surrounding the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, for instance, concerns the name of the chair given by the Libyan government. It is called the Umar al-Mukhtar Professorship of Arab Culture. According to the center's director, Michael Hudson, Umar al-Mukhtar was "the most famous Islamic patriot and led the resistance against the Italian occupation of Libya." This suggests that the purpose of Libya's contribution was to honor patriotism, an honorable sentiment, by promoting scholarship in the name of one of its greatest exemplars. But one of the center's many critics in the academic world says Umar al-Mukhtar was not such an admirable figure at all, but rather "a militant Muslim religious leader . . . who proclaimed and led a holy war against the French and Italian Christians in Chad and later in Cyrenacia." His implication is that the real purpose of the gift was to advertise the virtues of political terrorism, suggesting that the center itself is nothing but a propagandist for the Arabs.

In addition to this sort of exegesis, discussions of the Georgetown Arab Studies Center are veiled in an air of international intrigue. In speaking to its critics (who, in the cloak-and-dagger spirit, like to remain anonymous), I was constantly being referred around an informal network of people, each of whom would promise that the next one had crucial "files" or "information" on the flow of Arab money to Georgetown and other universities. Pursuing each lead, I would generally be given a sheaf of familiar newsclippings and the name of the next man along the chain.

However, in this process certain documents passed into my hands that do cast an unflattering light on the Arabs' newfound interest in American institutions of higher learning. There is a treatise called "Zionist Control of Arabic Studies in the US," by one Ibraham Aby-Lughod, which alleged that "the N.E. [Near East] centers in such American universities as Princeton, Chicago, Harvard, and California turned into Zionist agencies, into bases for Israelis as well as American espionage." Even more suspicious is a pamphlet called "A Critical Analysis of Islamic Studies at North American Universities," compiled by the undoubtedly up-to-no-good Islamic Youth Congress in Tripoli (but published by the wholesome-sounding Unity Publishing Company of Cedar Rapids, Iowa), which goes through the faculty members at various universities, making observations like, "Elsa Lichtenstadter and Isadore Twersky are names which similarly suggest caution." No one offered me any evidence connecting these publications with the Georgetown center and Arab contributions to it. But as one source put it, "you begin to see the connections, do you not?"

This kind of talk causes the people at Georgetown to cry foul (or, more particularly, double standard), with some justice. The Jewish Community Council of Washington provides Georgetown University with funds earmarked for a visiting Israeli professor every year, and this raises no howls of protest about money with strings attached tainting the purity of the academy. Georgetown's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies is constantly charged with violating standards of scholarly objectivity, because it is perceived as promoting one side of a controversial subject. But the more respectable Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown, which is widely perceived as having a right-wing, cold-war bent, has unquestioned prestige in the academic world. The issue here isn't really academic standards, but if everyone is going to pretend that it is, then the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies ought to be judged accordingly.

Georgetown is not unusual for having an area studies center in which different academic disciplines concentrate on a particular geographic area. Such centers have proliferated as the financial well-being of universities has declined, because they usually pay their own freight through fund-raising in the United States, and sometimes through grants from foreign governments. Hudson of the Georgetown Arab Studies Center says, "We were told by the university that it couldn't do much in terms of general funds. So we decided to go to the American private sector and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arab world itself." Three years later, the center has a bankroll of $1.3 million, 15 affiliated faculty members and one degree-granting program: a master's in Arab Studies. It also publishes occasional papers and reports and sponsors films, lectures and conferences.

There are those who believe that universities shouldn't accept money from foreign governments, period, but they're in the minority these days. More prevalent is the view that cash is cash, but when it's foreign it often leads to too many complications. "Their needs and our needs may not be identical," says Dennis Skiotis, the associate director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard. "We may want a chair in Persian literature and the Iranian government may offer a chair in Persian folklore instead. We're not too happy dealing with governments." Besides these questions of limiting academic freedom, there's the issue of whether the governments are simply immoral and shouldn't be the source of gifts, no matter what the gifts are used for. In the organized Jewish community, the feeling is that the line should be drawn at Iraq and Libya—"regardless," one official of the American Jewish Committee says, "of whether the money's going to save blue babies." The position of Hudson and others at Georgetown with authority over the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies is that what matters is the purpose of a gift, not its source.

Everybody is against the idea of a donor being able to dictate specific hiring decisions or the content of courses. This doesn't go on at Georgetown, but this is at least partly because, as is the case at most area studies centers, it doesn't have to. "I don't claim they're out having secret meetings with people," says one Georgetown professor who is not friendly to the Arab Studies Center. "Life is not like this. Things don't work this way. These conversations never happen. It is understood what the parameters are. It would no more occur to the center to hire a Zionist than it would occur to the Institute of Policy Studies [a left-wing think-tank] to hire Sam Huntington [a right-wing thinker]."

So among those who aren't bothered by the tainted-money question, the center must stand or fall academically on the basis of whether it appears to dance to its benefactors' tune to a greater extent than do most area studies centers. It's naive to assume that some of that doesn't go on everywhere. But it must be said that the similarity between the donors' concern and the institution's scholarly product is unusually blatant at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies.

Unlike the older Middle Eastern studies centers at other universities, the Georgetown center makes no attempt to achieve balance by studying Israel along with the Arab nations or by hiring Israeli scholars. At the Harvard Middle East center, Arabs and Israelis of widely divergent political views coexist peacefully. At Georgetown, the political sympathies of all the prominent faculty and staff lie with the Palestinians.

Georgetown's answer to this is that it is running a center for *Arab*, not Middle East studies, and that the political views of the staff members are their own, not the center's. "The center does not take political positions," says Hudson. "We've never taken a stand on a political issue, and we never will. Individual professors are asked their opinions." But in reading through the center's various publications, this distinction between the center and its constituents does not seem particularly clear. The center does publish papers on purely academic subjects, like "A Two-Sector Model of Capital Requirements and Technical Substitution With Special Application to the Egyptian Economy" and "Visions of Social Reality in the Contemporary Arab Novel." Many of its lectures, films and publications, however, deal with politics, particularly the Palestinian question. There is the occasional Jewish lecturer, but the overall tone is quite hostile to Israel.

For example: In its "Reports" series, the center published a speech by Hisham Sharabi—the holder of the Libyan chair and a widely respected scholar—called "The Palestinians: 30 Years After," which says:

> *It is folly to think that the Palestinians can somehow be overlooked or sacrificed in a political settlement. Yet this Zionist self-deception—so similar to that of the French settlers of Algeria in the late 1950s and early 1960s and of the white supremicists of Southern Africa today—seems to lead them to believe that they can expel people, expropriate their land and homes, establish colonial settlements in other countries' territories, and successfully defy the whole world.*

Last year, Georgetown University's official press office sent out a press release entitled "Arab Editor Says Invasion Is Israeli Plan," which reported on a "briefing" held by a Lebanese editor, Clovis Maksoud, who was a visiting scholar at the center. Israel, the press release said, has a "contingency plan" to "extend control over southern Lebanon."

The center also published testimony by Michael Hudson before a Senate subcommittee in 1977, which says:

> *Israel bases its refusal [to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization] on the grounds that the PLO has long been publicly and unequivocally opposed to terrorism. . . . It has not been easy to win general acquiescence to the idea of settling for this small fraction of what they believe, with considerable justice, to be their entire homeland.*

The *Washington Star* recently published an article by Hudson called "Peace Treaty Through Arab Eyes," which said, "Stigmatized, ridiculed, and rejected by Israel and the United States, the PLO understandably has vowed publicly to do all it can to thwart the 'autonomy' process. . . .The PLO can promise credibly to deliver continuing unrest and violence. . . ."

As private political views, fine. But all of these remarks unmistakably bear the imprimatur of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

center and of Georgetown University. The center is not doing a very good job of laying to rest people's fears that one of its missions is to propagandize for the Arabs generally and the PLO in particular.

What the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies reminded me of was a fairly sophisticated and professional think-tank with a political point of view, sort of an American Enterprise Institute of the Arab cause. AEI makes no bones about trying to influence policy in one direction, and indeed it has done so. The center at Georgetown does make bones about it, because it is connected with a university that doesn't want to be thought of as using its scholarly resources to advance a particular political cause. But that's what Georgetown and its Arab Studies Center really are doing. The center's brochure assures prospective donors—both Arab governments and American businesses—that they'll be getting their money's worth. To the governments, the brochure says, "The goal of enhanced knowledge and understanding between the United States and the Arab world was presented as the principal inducement to contribute." The inducement to corporations is somewhat more explicit: "with its easy access to policy-makers in virtually every Arab constituency, the CCAS is a useful forum and meeting place for business and finance figures, Arab and American."

Now there's nothing wrong with Arab governments spending money in Washington to influence opinion in favor of their cause, or with corporations spending money in Washington to make contact with prospective Arab customers. The question is whether a university should be the setting for these activities, especially when it remains adamantly attached to its traditional image of disinterested scholarship.

The cynical position is that *every* donor to a university wants something in return, so the Arabs are no different from the Carnegies and Fords. But when robber barons—or for that matter, most individuals—give universities money, the return is abstract good will and absolution for past sins. The Arabs want something more immediately and directly connected to the scholarship they are funding. They're financing a center concerned substantially with the contemporary politics of the Middle East. This is roughly equivalent to John D. Rockefeller financing a center in 1900 devoted to the study of Standard Oil and the antitrust question. And indeed, there is nothing about the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies to indicate that it has the desire, in studying an extremely controversial subject, to balance its scholarly diet.

Of course, scholars are never truly objective, and scholarship itself only rarely is. People quite naturally come to opinions and espouse their points of view. But the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies combines every conceivable opportunity for bias: subject matter that's more controversial than any other in the world today; funding coming from one of the parties in the controversy; every member of the staff happening to be on the same side of the controversy as the donor. It requires a totally cynical view of academia to believe that the funding and mission of the Georgetown Center for Contemporary Arab Studies is essentially no different from what goes on in the rest of the scholarly world. If Georgetown University is going to keep saying that the center is just academic business as usual, then it's either extremely jaded about its own scholarly standards, or it's not being very truthful.

A short story.

Fatal

by Helen Chasin

My doctor says I am not contagious. What I have is common: Vera and Marian have had it, Michelle read about it in *Cosmopolitan*. Most typically it results from heavy sex following a period of abstinence; my doctor has just in effect described last weekend, so I do not have cancer. As always I am very relieved to find out. However, I neglected to ask how long a period of abstinence is. Vera says the moral is obvious, you have to have regular sex, to be on the safe side let's say regular heavy sex, don't forget I am a very sexual person. Also I'm in my late 30s, this is my peak right now. I'm beginning to feel dangerous.

There are beautiful men everywhere. All kinds. On

Helen Chasin is a former Yale Younger Poet and author of two volumes of poetry, *Casting Stones* and *Coming Close*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the street, in the museum, at the airport, during rock concerts, even poetry readings, even blonds and they are not my type. So far it is just aesthetic. Jeans, corduroys, three-piece pinstripes . . . sometimes our eyes meet and we smile, an acknowledgment, I wonder whether I could be happy with him, maybe a life together, we pass. Suppose this is merely the tip of the iceberg, the thin end of the wedge? I may be insatiable. Maybe I'm going to end up in the literature.

Vanessa S, later the beautiful Vanessa B, reports experiencing sexual response at age four; of anything at all prior to that time she has no memory. What energy! She appears in everyone's autobiography: cherished wife and mother, beloved sister, inspiring colleague, adorable companion of quite a few. And talented; if we are to believe the accounts of family and friends she never became the artist she would have been.

My condition is, during onset, so painful that there's no doing anything else except suffer. The medicine is a miracle—within 12 hours you can get back to the usual, though you have to continue treatment for a while; the pain is a symptom, it's not the disease.

They always say that.

It turns out that the old argument that chastity can't hurt you is valid up to a point—that point being the one at which you abandon it.

Only they don't call it chastity anymore.

When is the last time you heard anyone say, "She sleeps around," about anyone? And how many constitutes *around*?

Think of beautiful, intense Edna M, literary toast of America, given to sleeping around and drinking. Maybe a little reefer at an occasional Saturday night Greenwich Village party. Subsequently she married a businessman and settled down to life in the country and a heavy habit; her friends could tell by her eyes. She was a good example, my mother said, of how you could love a rich man as easily as a poor one.

I do not find that to be true. I do not find the opposite to be true either. It's worse, it's more complex.

All three of my lovers live out of town. None is poor, on the other hand no one's a Rockefeller. All three know each other professionally, and don't know I know the other two. Two are dark, one is blond. They are all taller and two are older than I am. The oldest is 26 years older than the youngest. One of them thinks one of the others is a fuck and the other a cop-out. The cop-out thinks one of the dark ones has talent but he's immature and there's a problem about women. My daughter is rooting for the fuck, even though he is not the one who likes rock and roll. They all think I am bright, sensitive and interesting; one thinks I am highly eccentric, one says (possibly for effect) he thinks I am crazy. One of them is very close to being crazy himself. One of the normals claims to feel alienated from his life. They all think I'm sophisticated. Of the two who are not married, one never has been. The two who like elegant restaurants are neither the same as the two sports car freaks nor the two who smoke dope. They all have terrific telephone voices. There is a lot of talking.

All of us have gone out to dinner, spent at least one afternoon at a museum, discussed his work in depth. With two I've gone to the Saturday midnight showing of *The Harder They Come*, been to a poetry reading, picnicked in Central Park, made love all night, played pool upstairs at David and Vera's. These are the unique events: a discotheque, the Staten Island Ferry, doing coke, visiting the sister who may be about to have a breakdown and kill herself, body oil. Two of them have met Marian and two Michelle. One of them has seen me not answer the phone, just let it ring and later when it started ringing again not pick it up again. He has concluded that not answering the phone is a practice of mine but he's wrong. I thought it was the fuck and I couldn't handle it. Actually I have no practices.

Here is what has not happened: a fight, one of those long walks in the snow where it's as beautiful as a black-and-white photograph, a pregnancy scare, the scene in which you run into someone it would be better not to or someone who says something and 20 minutes afterward you're still shaking. Another thing that hasn't happened is group sex, and then later you have to deal with it.

On the other hand, this whole situation is a potential situation.

Or maybe it is already. Of course it could be worse, they could all live here.

A small, dark, intense, attractive young Englishwoman, Katherine M was married but kept going away. For her health. She sent letters back: when I come home we will be so happy, my darling, and never be separated again, we will drink tea in the evenings and smoke a cigarette. There are many letters. And a journal, in which a lot of men are referred to obliquely, although this may be a result of editing: a smile, a nationality, a red flower at the train station. These encounters were good for her, they helped her to miss the husband more, and their adorable little house. She died of consumption in a community of Russian mystics. Some of her stories could tear your heart out.

I have never called one of my lovers by another one's name, even in moments of great passion. That would be absolutely the worst, I couldn't forgive myself. Not that the wrong name doesn't surface sometimes, hover, loom. It does—and from last year too, and before that,

Coming Next Week:
Stephen Chapman
on the Quakers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

maybe a previous life—but I take care, I censor, I maintain a kind of eternal vigilance. Certain names threaten more frequently than others, there's one in particular . . . however my ex-husband's never occurs to me, sometimes even when I'm trying to think of it. Talking with my daughter, for example, I fudge, I stall, I refer to him as "your father." Or "daddy" if I'm feeling friendly. This forgetting is probably emotional. As you might expect there are overlaps: three Michaels, two Jacks, two Maximillians. In such cases I would be the only person to know if I made a mistake.

Five poets, four painters, three lawyers, two photographers, and a partner in a brokerage firm. Actually there have been others but they didn't last long.

All three of my lovers have very unusual names. So unusual that you'd never guess even if they locked you in a tower.

What do they think I'm doing when they aren't around? But they don't ask. What do they think my life is like?

Sometimes I try to picture what the weather is like where they are, the landscape. I imagine them reading, or working or being lonely. One of them is in another time zone. That means it's happening later, or earlier, like light years.

Of course my life is here. I think there are more beautiful men in this town than anywhere except Italy. Michelle says that all of the men in her neighborhood are homosexual. She takes them personally; the walk from her subway stop to her apartment is depressing, going for groceries infuriates her. Either they pay no attention to her at all or they do but it's just aesthetic, so what's the point? Michelle wants results. She wants to impinge: men trembling with desire, falling at her feet, offering the moon. Well everyone likes to be appreciated. The problem is in the fineness of the line between wanting action and looking for trouble. Sometimes you end up reading about it in the newspapers. Or a textbook.

The following ad appeared recently among the Personals in the *Village Voice* Classified:

> *Very attractive single male of 38, professional; highly educated, well traveled & well versed has fatal weakness for fatal women. Would like to hear from those still at large for nocturnal meetings in Manhattan & possibly long term romance.*

Of course your authentic femme fatale doesn't respond to a summons, she just materializes and ruins a person's life. Either Well Versed does not enjoy the pathology he claims or he hasn't encountered the genuine article. How long-term could he expect the affair to be? And "still at large" as opposed to what—imprisonment, death, mandatory retirement? Whatever this man does for a living he can't be a poet or a painter, he's too romantic. And he doesn't have his days free.

My daughter thinks I am irresistible. Not to her, to men. All men: I can have anyone I want, if I like them they like me back, they have no choice. My daughter is bright, sensitive, interesting, sophisticated and she is making a big mistake. She thinks I have these powers . . . She also thinks that sex for anyone past 40 is disgusting, except Paul Newman, which doesn't leave some of us a lot of time. When I pointed out that even if she started in immediately that would give her only 25 years she said, "Okay, past 45."

"Just wait," I said. I always say that. It's my concept of karma.

The three lovers are not the only men in my life. I have a son who lives with his father. I also have an obscene caller. For openers he said, "Hi there." He sounded so cheery, confiding, in fact optimistic . . . whoever it was I felt delighted to hear from him, hopeful even. Then he ruined it.

Actually his voice is a boy's. I wonder what he looks like.

He's been with me for six months now, it's getting to be a long-term relationship. The contacts are intermittent but highly charged. He's gone from talking to breathing to heavy moaning. I guess the carrying-on at the other end is supposed to sound like sex but it's a little off—more like someone doing an impression of sex, or a kind of soliloquy.

My father says the typical picture of these people is around 17, passive, withdrawn and afraid of women but they outgrow it. My daughter says he's not outgrowing it fast enough.

When I referred to him as "my pervert" one of my lovers said I sounded a little possessive.

Well of course, he's in my life, there's this connection, intercourse, *engagement*. Hi There won't let go and I can't, it's not up to me. Whoever he is we're in this together.

Last week a politician on the six o'clock news said about an opponent, "There was no confrontation. If there *was* a confrontation it was unilateral—on his part."

Sometimes I want to answer my pervert back, say it's all talk, I bet he can't get it up, suggest he's no Mick Jagger—but I'm afraid he'll rush over and kill me. With an axe. Impossible, my father says, he can't that's his problem.

Sometimes I picture this creep in his horrible, pathetic little Dickensian furnished room working himself into an obsessive froth. Three-thirty at night, six in the morning, only my actual voice can satisfy those spasmy yearnings. Maybe I'm there in his head all the time and the pressure builds; the froth is only a symptom. Maybe I'm driving him crazy.

The bastard is driving *me* crazy, and my daughter too. I hope he's in pain. My father says of course he's in pain, he's sick, but I mean real pain, not psychology.

When my friend Jeremy telephones he sounds like

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the pervert, but that's impossible because Jeremy and Barbara were visiting me one night when I got one of those calls. Unless, as my daughter and Barbara pointed out, Jeremy is diabolical. But I can't live like that. About every two or three weeks Jeremy calls and we have long conversations; he tells me the real story behind that stuff you read in the papers: Anjelica H, Elizabeth T, Bianca J, Olivia N-J. The real story often turns out to be in the direction of freaky. People have these predilections, and proclivities. They have these sides to them. Some people even have depths, but I don't know any. The people I know have moods, but that's different.

A long time ago when I was in treatment—never really completed, according to the shrink, there are a few problems we didn't resolve—I thought there were no secrets, just burdens of guilt and questions of definition. But I outgrew that.

I have a secret self. She is afraid she will be found out, and so am I. Encountering the phrase "the woman in me" makes me nervous: when she finally materialized she will ruin my life. She is more real than I because she is inevitable. She is older and fatter and shorter than I am. She has little piggy eyes and her skin is decaying. Over the big moldy housedress she wears a message T-shirt, a vest, sweaters. Her broken-down cotton stockings are rolled just above her knees; she also wears ankle socks and shredded sneakers. She carries around everywhere and at all times three shopping bags full of crap: Gristede's, Bloomingdale's, Astor Wines and Liquors. Talking to herself but right out loud SHE DOES NOT GIVE A FUCK ABOUT THE ROLLING STONES. At the bottom of the Gristede's bag there's a bunch of ratty scraps, smeary pieces of poems.

"Do you think I'm a weirdo?" Janice asks, because she has left the city and is living in a religious community upstate. The landscape is beautiful. They are all women there. Devotion, cooperation, contemplation, celibacy.

When Janice comes in to pick up her unemployment check we have dinner together. Last Wednesday night we witnessed one psychodrama, two heavy street scenes, and a case of hysterical derangement in a bar—gently escorted by police, its exit line was, "And don't call me *dear*, this is the Upper West Side."

Why should Janice be a weirdo? She is relaxed, she doesn't keep getting colds and flu, her work is better than ever. This is why: people keep saying that celibacy comes out of sickness: neurotic, afraid of men, mind/body dichotomy. These women ought to confront their true nature as lesbians, the lesbians said just before they left the group, never mind that social action and spiritual business. Everyone has a diagnosis. In fact the only thing wrong with celibacy is that quitting can make you sick.

Once when I was in college I mentioned to some guy that I liked sweating, the feel of it. He said, "Fenichel calls that skin eroticism."

Jeremy's aunt has a disease—who knows what? There are occasional remissions. The uncle is under continual strain, but hopeful. Every so often he issues bulletins:

We just turned the corner.
Things are looking up.
We just found another doctor and things are gonna be OK.

When I said to my shrink, "I am not afraid of men," he said, "I know." Thereby managing for once to surprise me.

Here is what I'm afraid of: that I use people up.

About the fires raging in Santa Barbara and threatening LA, a woman sunning herself into cancer beside a pool in Reno Nevada remarked, "They've got it out of control."

The three out-of-town lovers, for example, and the pervert are not the whole story. I have these recurring love dreams: E. L. Doctorow, Mick Jagger, and Jimmy Cliff. It isn't sex, they take place in broad daylight, out-of-doors, and he and I are intensely happy, arm-in-arm, laughing, almost dancing, a regular Coke ad.

The cop-out got upset about Jimmy Cliff. He does not like this black person's being in my dreams. Because darkness represents overwhelming, dangerous, forbidden sexuality.

As opposed, say, to Mick Jagger?

What he really means is "that is your illness speaking:" jungle music, a stud in my bedroom at night, death. What he means is something about my using him up.

Here is another ad that ran in the *Voice* Personals:

Sagittarius. Male inmate. ½ Indian, ½ Black, 6'2". Attending college. Seeking correspondence with woman. Interested?
#86B1846
Box 17, Comstock, N.Y.

Sagittarius is taller than one of the lovers and probably darker than all three of them. Also it could be said that he's more deeply out-of-town than all of them. Think of the opportunities for contemplation and abstinence. My daughter is interested to know what he did to land in the slammer.

I am interested in intensity.

A tall blonde attractive American who took up residence abroad, Sylvia P made much of adoring sex, how healthy it was, collected newspaper clippings about violent crimes, and killed herself shortly before becoming one of the major figures in contemporary writing. One of my former lovers—whose own work is incomprehensible but nonetheless tedious—said of Sylvia P's poetry that ultimately it was disappointing; you couldn't live there.

There is a man who is living with me who is not my lover but he probably will be and it won't work out. He is a tall dark elegant doper. Having a conversation with him is like talking on the phone. He wants peace and I want passion. Neither of us is getting it. He says passion is for literature.

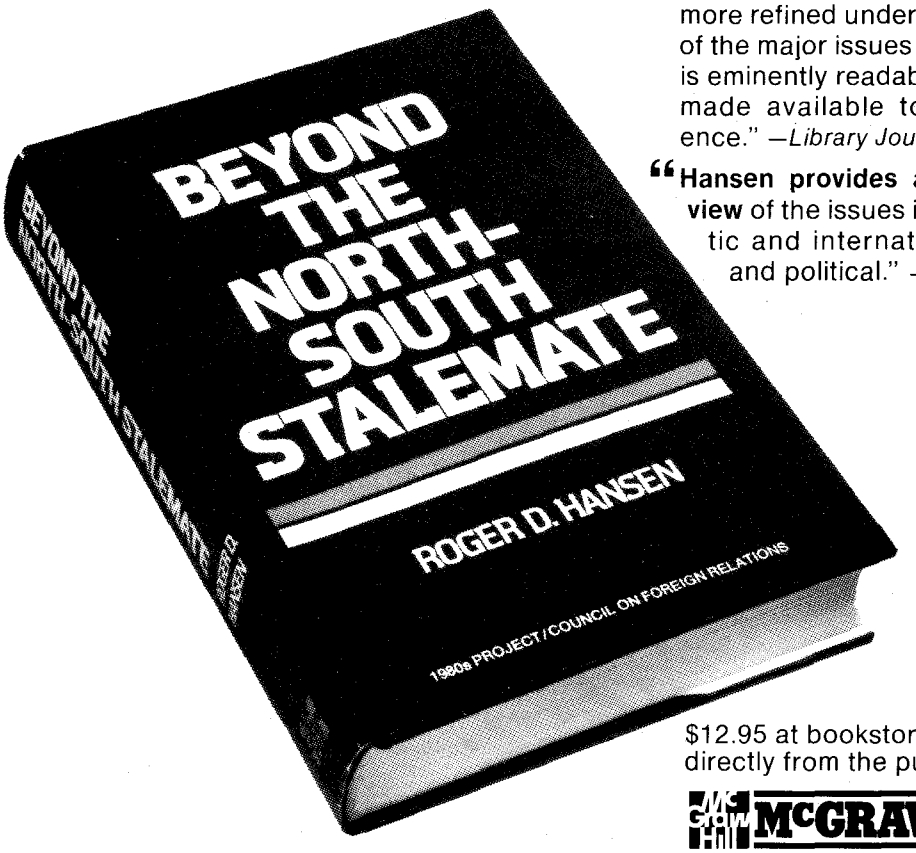
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A unique study that takes a new, broader look at one of the key problems explored in the 1980s Project/ Council on Foreign Relations Series

Persistent poverty and obstacles to continued world economic growth require improved relations between the richer states of "the North" and the poorer states of "the South." Earlier 1980s Project books have dealt with particular dimensions of the North-South question. Now, BEYOND THE NORTH-SOUTH STALEMATE offers readers a truly comprehensive view of this vitally important world problem. After supplying background material on the interests and attitudes that have bred today's North-South tensions, author Roger D. Hansen provides his own trenchant analysis of the situation and proposes ways to move beyond "stalemate" toward more constructive, equitable, and durable approaches to global economic reform.

"**This timely book has great heuristic value** and should contribute to a more refined understanding of some of the major issues of our times.... It is eminently readable and should be made available to a broad audience." —*Library Journal*

"**Hansen provides a coherent overview** of the issues involved—domestic and international, economic and political." —*Kirkus Reviews*



$12.95 at bookstores, or order directly from the publisher.

McGraw-Hill 79

1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10020

ABOUT THE 1980s PROJECT

The 1980s Project will consist of some 25 volumes, with 17 titles published to date. Written by authorities in world affairs, 1980s Project books examine the major international problems that will confront the United States over the coming decade: human rights, energy, monetary relations, the Third World, industrial policy, and more. **Send for FREE BROCHURE describing all the books now available in this widely-acclaimed series.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Curious Careers

Ermanno Olmi is a talented director and a rare man, but his career has become sad. I can date exactly when that happened for me: August 21, 1964, when I lunched with him in Rome. I had seen two of his first three feature films, *Il Posto* (*The Sound of Trumpets*) and *The Fiancés* and had thought them gems, which after many viewings I still think. I asked him about his plans. Olmi, a truly religious man, said he was going to make a film about Pope John, and he described the unconventional technique he had in mind. He said he had already chosen the actor to do the narration on camera and to step into the film from time to time as John. When I asked if I might know who it was, he answered proudly, "Rod Steiger." My heart sank.

It has never quite risen since then on the subject of Olmi. The papal film, *A Man Called John*, as Olmi himself now says, was a mistake. But he went on to make other sorts of mistakes, all of them effected, curiously enough, through his own unmistakable, gentle talent. He moved, as directors from the working class often do when they get success, into middle-class subjects, and he fumbled them, as such directors often do. But when he returned to working-class subjects, his grip seemed to have loosened, like stretched elastic. *The Scavengers* was about the people who scrape a living by digging up bits of metal in the old Alpine battlefields of World War I. (The carnage of the Italian-Austrian battles has been overshadowed by the carnage of the western front.) The picture had some of Olmi's former freshness of empathy, but it was flaccid.

Now Olmi has made what is obviously intended as his magnum opus, *The Tree of Wooden Clogs* (Gaumont/Sacis/New Yorker), which won the Grand Prize at Cannes last year. It's a three-hour film about Lombardy peasants at the turn of the century, the work and world that Olmi's grandparents came from. He wrote, directed, photographed, edited and, most apparently, loved the film. Dismally, I must report that the result does not restore him to his early level.

For the first half hour or so I thought otherwise. Clearly this was to be Olmi's "Mass," his "Holy Family," his treatment or setting of a familiar subject revitalized through reverence and art. The peasant life is articulated knowingly. We see a group of sharecroppers (as we would call them) who live in communal quarters around a courtyard on a huge estate near Bergamo in central Lombardy. Five families are next to one another, each with its own characteristics and problems, all under the immediate eye of the farm manager and the more distant eye of the owner. All parts are played by Bergamasque people, not actors, who speak their dialect. Even if you know no Italian, you will hear a sing-song intonation different from the Italian inflections you are used to. The color photography, intent to celebrate the countryside and the labor in it, is empathic. The editing has an unforced contrapuntal quality. The details of living are rough and vivid and fine: the slaughtering of a pig, the hoarding of chicken droppings in winter for tomato planting in spring, the evenings when the families gather in a stable while the women knit and sew and the men tell stories and they all sometimes flow into song.

Beneath the rhythm of the changing seasons, of birth and quarrels and illness and marriage, Olmi implies social change. The title comes from the action of one of the peasants whose boy breaks his wooden clogs—such as all of them wear—and needs new ones to go to school. Against the rules, the peasant cuts down a young tree one night to carve out clogs for his boy. Eventually the action is discovered, he and his family are evicted, and presumably the boy's education is ended. Along with this oppression we see unrest in Milan when a newly married farm couple go there on a brief honeymoon: soldiers take dissidents away in chains.

All of this is good material. But as the film moves on, we see Olmi himself undermining it, in at least four ways. First, the performers are not good enough. In *Il Posto* and *The Fiancés* Olmi, by luck or skill, chose non-actors who convey everything that is needed. Not here. The father who cuts the clogs, the young bridegroom, an impoverished widow—these and others are like stand-ins, models for the professional actors who could have drawn on them. (All "neo-realist" directors who use non-actors are playing roulette, not always successfully. De Sica succeeded with non-actors in *Bicycle Thief*, but *Umberto D.*, which ought to have been a masterpiece, is not because the old man in the title role is inadequate.)

Second, some of the incidents are so predictable that all we can do while they happen is hope that our prediction is wrong. It rarely is. The widow's chief possession is one cow, which sickens. The veterinary tells her to slaughter it while she can still get a little money for the meat. She persists in nursing it, prays to the Virgin, forces holy water down its throat. The cow's death

Films Worth Seeing

The China Syndrome. A thriller that really thrills. Subject: nuclear energy. Fault: simplifying troubles by making power executives murderous heavies.

The Deer Hunter. Big, straggling but serious work about American male mystique, here and in Vietnam. Splendidly acted.

Norma Rae. Almost any praise is inadequate for Sally Field's performance in this somewhat naive but very, very moving film about labor organizing in the Deep South today.

Richard Pryor, Live in Concert. An almost unbroken 80 minutes of laughs, some of them social slashes, most of them raunchy.

SK

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wouldn't in itself have exalted the film; but the cow's recovery is one more sinking strophe.

Then, connected with the above, is Olmi's assignation of good and evil, right and wrong. The owner is shown only as a cold zombie, the manager as a petty tyrant. Seen from the peasants' view, those colors are doubtless accurate enough, if uninteresting. But the peasants, though not faultless, are seen through such a haze of adoration that Olmi's picture becomes anachronistic in a way, more of an exercise in 50-year-old sentimentality about the proletariat than a re-creation of 100-year-old peasant life.

And then there are simple but immensely important matters of shot and composition. I've written here about honest playwrights whose clumsiness unintentionally leads them to dishonest writing. In the past Olmi has shown art in the employment of his honesty that kept his films from banal texture. But here this is certainly not the prevailing fact. For instance, when the family is evicted at the end, the close-up of the little boy's tearful face, the shot of the wagging latern on the cart as it moves off into the night, are not austere enough for Olmi's high purpose.

Like other unfortunate artists in all the arts, Olmi seems to lack an essential quality: the ability for self-management, something that is quite independent of talent and is imperative for its fulfillment. He has gifts, but he makes poor choices and, in the process, weakens his gifts. It's not the (supposedly) classic American story of the sell-out: in his career, selling-out has never figured. It's more subtle. In mistaken ambition he chose material that was uncongenial; and when he returned to his "own" material, he rejoiced too much in that return, in his love of his subjects. In his two early, excellent films, he knew that the making of art means, as many have known, to lie well in the service of truth. He has come to rely too much on truth itself.

Another, more peculiar disappointment. The Cuban filmmaker Tomas Gutierrez Alea was introduced to the US with his fifth feature, *Memories of Underdevelopment* (*TNR*, May 19, 1973), a fascinating and perceptive film about a Cuban bourgeois intellectual adjusting to the revolution. Last year we got Gutierrez Alea's seventh feature, *The Last Supper*, a heavy-handed historical grotesquerie about slavery, intended to prefigure the revolution. Now we get his fourth feature, *Death of a Bureaucrat*, made the year before *Memories*, a farce about the bureaucracy of the revolution. An utter failure. The plot deals with red-tape difficulties in re-burying a corpse that had to be exhumed in order to retrieve a work-card that had been buried with it, and the whole film looks as if it had been planned by a committee formed by the Film Ministry to prove that Communists have humor. The very least the director might have done was to find a leading actor—a farceur, if possible—distinguishable from the corpse he is trying to bury. And the many homages to Laurel and Hardy, to Harold Lloyd and others, might have been less obstreperously nudging.

Now that we've seen dim pictures made before and after Gutierrez Alea's good one, it's time to wonder whether the good one was a happy accident, the kind that sometimes occurs in a mediocre artist's life. Maybe *Memories* is to Gutierrez Alea what *Carmen* was to Bizet.

America's Humor: From Poor Richard To Doonesbury
by Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill

(Oxford; $17.50)

Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century
by John E. Kasson

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $12.50, Hill and Wang, paper; $5.95)

The sheer range, diversity and richness of American humor, our folklore and practice of "fun," comprise a great and complex comic tradition. Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill rightly call their subject "the most creative achievement of our countrymen." Certainly Americans have been inventive here as in no other cultural area except that of religion. In her still classic study, *American Humor* (1931), Constance Rourke pointed out that even American religious sects, with their half-consciously hilarious names, "Shakers," "Groaners," "Come-Outers," and their grandiose writings and myths, owe much to comic sources.

What is so funny? Why America, of course. From its inception America was that strange phenomenon, a wilderness settled by (more or less) civilized men. Entirely suited for neither childish ways nor adult ones, illiterate and learned, less an adolescent than a hybrid, America was a wonder, a monstrosity. Understandably, its earliest collective efforts at self-consciousness capitalized on its cultural confusion as a colossal joke. Only by exploiting its amusement value could America both incorporate criticism from cultivated observers within and without, and account for the violence of its appetites and the reach of its resources.

The hayseed "Brother Jonathan" (the popular opponent to England's "John Bull"), the shrewd Yankee, the swaggering backwoodsman whose closest friend was his gun—their very incarnation was an indication of how quickly the American finger found and pulled the comic trigger. Mrs. Trollope, Dickens, and other antebellum visitors from abroad may have condemned this new land—the omnipresent spitters, the pigs in the streets, the ceaseless noise of harangues on street corners, in Congress and in the newspapers—but how could they be sure they weren't viewing a show put on deliberately to fool them? If the Americans themselves couldn't give the answer, that hardly mattered. It was the ambiguity, the possibility that they were the jokesters as well as the joke, that saved their pride. Through humor and the masquerade it offered, the American comic, then as today, handled his own publicity and advertised his own persona.

This is a way of saying that American humor is a humor of the frontier; not a literal "frontier" in the Turnerian sense, but that barrier one touches, that line one crosses, in winning a race, in getting there first. It is the frontier of the supreme, conspicuous effort; of the feat, no matter how nonchalantly performed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN SLOW MOTION

If I am concentrating, really seeing, a big serve will be coming at me in slow motion. It's like that with music, too.
—Torben Ulrich

Well, yes, and sex sometimes,
and when, answering in class a wise-
ass question, I hear a perfect
sentence, deliberate, slow, precise,
falling into place. Or, more, that
warm May noon, the lines

of tulips by the main
hospital walk, when we were told,
"I'm afraid he's gone." The words came,
yes, distinctly, slowly, unfolding
that meager life: each day the same
attempt to unconstrain

what strength there was, the will
to raise his head and hold it up.
"Ineducable" (they'd said), he
was all will. And will—the mute shape
of his need and provenance—we
learned from him, we know still,

does not depend on mind.
The room returned, its pace restored.
We left. The tulips held to me
their dark. I thought of Jonson's words:
my sin was too much hope of thee.
May all will rest, defined.

David Sofield

In the 19th century, Mike Fink, a rough and tumble boatman on the barely settled Ohio and Mississippi rivers; Davy Crockett, hunter, fighter, congressman (of a sort); and many other frontiersmen and toughs passed permanently into the realm of the tall tale. In the legends about them, such figures are violent, greedy, ready to get "dead drunk" at the first opportunity, boastful, and as brave as they are cruel and stupid. Several decades later in *Innocents Abroad* (1869), Mark Twain wove skillful variations on such arrogance. Twain's American "pilgrims" in Europe are cultural frontiersmen. Faced with the demand to revere the artistic accumulations their own country so conspicuously lacks, they balk. They will learn only so much, and no more, and they stop learning at just the point where their acquired knowledge functions as insolent absurdity. Confronted with Michelangelo's masterpieces, they retaliate by stubbornly insisting that Michelangelo made everything they are shown—including the universe. Guides do not understand, Twain points out regretfully, the American joke.

Thirty years later, in 1897, five unknown young women posed sidewise in a row before a camera at Coney Island. A spontaneous burlesque, they form an amateur chorus line, itself a kind of sexual frontier. Smiling impishly at their observers, they bend forward from the hips, hands behind their backs, the short skirts of their bathing suits jauntily lifted to reveal firm buttocks in ribboned panties. (Kasson uses this wonderful snapshot as the frontispiece for *Amusing the Million.*) And still another 30-odd years later, Dorothy Parker, legendary as the wittiest, most modern woman in New York, itself the frontier of the 20th century, made comic history with her response to the news of Calvin Coolidge's death. "How could they tell?" In his book *Let Your Mind Alone* (1937), James Thurber opened a kind of psychological frontier that R. D. Laing and others would later settle when he solemnly assured his readers: "I would be the last person to say that madness is not a solution." Mike Fink, Davy Crockett, Twain, the Coney Island girls, Parker, Thurber, despite their differences, are all engaged in the put-down, if not of the cosmos, at least of a continent, a president or a convention. To joke is to win, even to establish new rules to play by, new games at which to triumph, and new universes in which to play. The common frontier here is a kind of licensed mania, whether histrionic or deadpan.

It has been argued that humor is the basis of all American culture, high and low. Rourke made a careful case in 1931 that humor was the dissolvent that melted the division between American "lowbrows" and "highbrows." According to Rourke, Melville is as monstrous, Whitman as chaotic and unfinished, Poe as sly and agile as their popular anonymous comic contemporaries in the popular culture. Rourke strained her case in making these connections, but it was an especially valid one for 19th-century America. Hill and Blair move easily and naturally from comic almanacs to Washington Irving, from the "Phunny Phellows"—those late 19th-century torturers of the alphabet—to Twain.

Blair and Hill note that early oral tale-tellings and joke fests often found or created audiences composed of several different social classes—as did all our better 19th-century humor. Laughter served a crucial political and a social function in our democracy. The spectacular success of Davy Crockett, Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nashby, not to speak of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dickens or Twain, bespeaks a shared, if unformulated, sense of values. For people to laugh together is, in the American view, to like each other, to confer and receive instant popularity, to set in motion the democratic dynamic of equal timing.

If, as Blair and Hill demonstrate, shared comedy promised fulfillment of young America's need for wide-based cultural self-expression and self-invigoration, why did comic literature (the case of the 20th-century comic non-literary media is a very different one) change, or perhaps I should say, split into decided lowbrow and at least higher-brow camps between 1900 and 1930? Blair and Hill note a shift in comic modes at the turn of the 20th century from rustic to urban, and an ongoing contrast between establishment and anti-establishment humor. They record an increasing interest in the funniness of the failure, the misfit, the neurotic. They trace the comic line from boastfulness that can substitute its claims, to boastfulness that can't make good, to timid abstention from all contest. The difference between Davy Crockett dispatching bears and Walter Mitty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

buying puppy biscuits while dreaming of glory is a big one.

The comic figures of the Victorian period are voracious; they eat too much, drink too much, kill too much. Like their few but mighty latter-day descendants of the 1920s, the mythical Paul Bunyon and the equally mythical Babe Ruth, they are creatures of appetite. Their pathos, and they do possess pathos, is that of omniverousness, always an emblem both of energy and futility. Like the Mel Brooks character in *The Producers*, they scream "I want everything I ever wanted!" No maturation is possible for the Crocketts and the Finks, only incessant efforts at satiation. With Whitman, their "elite" counterpart, they appoint themselves spokesmen, if only for a portion of the national character. They are loudspeakers; they must represent us, speak to us and for us, get our attention, or they lose their function. Highbrows may disown such lowbrows, but the lowbrows will never disown the highbrows. Though they may mock and scorn them, they hold on; they can't be shaken off, they *do* want everything, if only as a challenge. But at the century's turn, understatement and withdrawal replace overstatement and aggression as the predominant comic mode.

The cause is not only, as Hill and Blair note, that the American frontier closed, that lust could no longer be the national anthem. Nor is it clear that urbanization forced the shift from upbeat to downbeat humor; Mose the fireman, the plug-ugly, who "loved dat engine better den my dinner" was an antebellum New Yorker. The more crucial fact is that about the time of World War I "mass" humor came into being and quickly outdistanced what Rourke and others had called "popular" humor. Blair and Hill note repeatedly that, contrary to Rourke's findings, American popular humor was formed more decisively by those who wrote it down than by those who passed it on in oral form. This is a way of arguing, as Hill and Blair rightly do, that American humor has always been a literary tradition, and one worth serious attention; but it is also an indication that comedy in this country, whether in the shape of jest books, almanacs or collections of seriously crafted tales, has always been a marketable commodity.

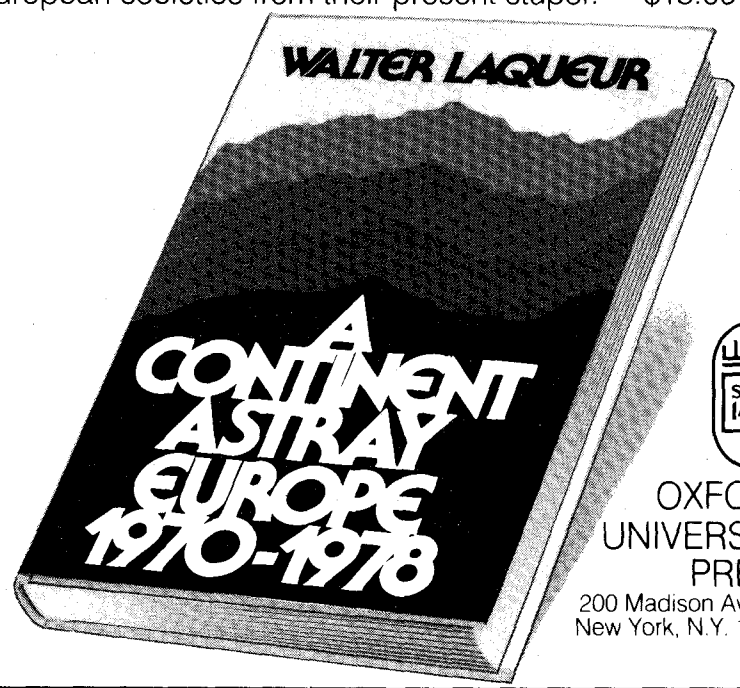
Mass art, as opposed to popular art, involves technological mass production and the assumption of the utterly commercial goal of a potentially unlimited audience or market for the products thus created. Gilbert Seldes was not far from wrong when he said in the 1950s that the invention and broad dissemination in the mid-1920s of radios, with their ads and their instant total technological transmission of any noise at any time, marked the obsolescence of "popular" culture, which he himself had defended as the self-expression of vastly talented individuals three decades earlier in *The Seven Lively Arts*. A joke ceases to be a test of intelligence or shared values when the blatant hope is that everyone will "get it"; instead it becomes commercial exhibition of wit designed for the dense. One is painfully not on one's own in such a sub-comic universe.

Advertising offers the easiest example. Think of those too familiar TV housewives steered condescendingly through the maze of domestic incompetence that makes up their daily lives; the punch line becomes the right product. This is no random illustration. The main characteristics of 19th-century humor, most notably its stress on appetite, were taken over and cheapened in the 20th century by advertising and the slick magazines, TV programs, shopping malls and the chain stores it fostered, phenomena mistakenly ignored by Hill and Blair. Ads have a sodden joke at their center, a joke meant to do no more than announce its presence by a thud. An omniverous optimism is their natural atmosphere. S.J. Perelman's brilliant hope for a day when the advertising industry would, so to speak, come out of the closet and admit its inherent deadness and despondency, when a couple in an ad might appear casually at a neighbor's house announcing, "we just dropped in to sneer at your towels," has still not been realized.

The town wits of the 1920s, 1930s and later decades, the urbanites who wrote plays, newspaper columns, *New Yorker* pieces, and lunched at the Algonquin, increasingly came to disown the commercial humor of the advertisements and the amusement parks. Yet, unlike the "genteel" humorists who preceded them, Charles Dudley Warner or the infinitely charming Stephen Leacock, they did not write with ironic grace of little rural pockets of the world still untouched by modern life. Instead, they made the new mass humor and its audience their joke, their subject matter. They took the split, traditional in

Crisis and response.

"Fragmentation, internal squabbles, and aimlessness," writes Walter Laqueur, characterize Western Europe today. Now this noted analyst of international affairs probes the roots of these interlocking social, political, and economic crises, proposing radical new measures to "awaken European societies from their present stupor." $15.00



SINCE 1478

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

200 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American comic tales, between educated narrator and illiterate character, the gap between "elite" artists and popular material pointed out by Hill and Blair, to new extremes. Their writing always imaginatively posits a mass, a crowd—of imitators, of buyers, ludicrously anxious for direction, advice, solace, futilely bullied and misled by advice books, fads, the media; and it is among this throng that the urban humorists pick their careful comic way. With a stroke they at least theoretically demolish the mass market at which commercialized humor aims. The laughter of the wits is at least as critical as it is contagious, and he who laughs with them participates in an act of discernment, certainly about the masses, possibly about himself. When the laconic and brilliant humorist Ring Lardner told his young sons, at that time eager fans of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, "I liked Beth best because she died," he had good-naturedly condemned their taste, Alcott's talents and the American public in general.

If the comic writers and figures of the 19th century are obsessed with appetite, devouring all material that comes their way, the finest pre-World War II 20th-century humorists contrive a kind of pick-up-sticks comedy; they are fastidious connoisseurs. Where their predecessors are gluttons, they suffer from incipient anorexia. Women appear in the 19th-century comic universe only as objects of lust. In a male world whose natural emblem is Niagara Falls and whose ethical creed is prejudice backed by force, women represent gauges of male prowess. But Women—huge figures in Steig's *New Yorker* drawings, predatory masses of matter in Thurber's cartoons, button-bursting vamps in Peter Arno's caricatures of modern mating, nagging and over-conventional wives in Benchley's vignettes—dominate the 20th-century male comic imagination. The grotesqueness, the unintelligent exaggeration of the females of the species is underlined by the fact that the spectator's or reader's interest is always drawn to the men who cower before them, fooled, fleeced, trussed and desperately ill at ease. These parodic female forms seem to symbolize mass culture itself; they are certainly appetite personified, and faced by such indiscriminate yet manipulative hunger, masculine ingestion ceases.

This early 20th-century gap between mass technologically-based comedy and its critical commentators is the starting and ending place of John Kasson's brilliant study of Coney Island, *Amusing the Million*. Through skillfully chosen photographs and highly imaginative careful analysis, Kasson implicitly argues that Coney Island was American appetite, America-as-joke, incarnate. Coney Island indeed emerges in Kasson's book as the first large-scale example of that peculiar American tendency to make places themselves into geographic jokes; our billboard-lined highways, our "strips" crowded with stands and outlet stores, Times Square, perhaps Los Angeles itself, gain what charm they have as well as their considerable ability to horrify because they are, as almost no European place is, so self-consciously commercialized as to be funny.

Kasson believes Coney Island provides a "laboratory" of mass culture. Our first amusement park was set up by shrewd entrepreneurs aware of the growing deficiencies of sedate late 19th-century parks and exhibitions in satisfying the needs of the masses. It is one long step from the process described by Hill and Blair, the writing down of American comedy by authors and businessmen skilled in recognizing and developing popular taste, to the planning of a vast amusement park which would attract and create the "crowd" as we now know it. At Coney Island, lower-middle- and lower-class people could free themselves momentarily from the constraints of genteel culture. For a nickle, they could smash as much crockery as they wanted. The sign over the booth read, "If you can't break up your own home, break up ours!" At the three big amusement parks, Luna, Steeplechase and Dreamland, the eclectic architecture which Kasson wittily terms "Imperial Orgiastic," a potpourri of Spain, the Far East, and the commercial imagination, promised tourists they could have anything they wanted. Violence was present as surely as on Mike Fink's rivers; elephants were electrocuted, horses dove from high places into shallow waters. The terrific noise, the food stands dotting the scene, the carefully marketed displays of goods, the sheer atmosphere of availability, urged spectators to spend lavishly, to spend at least everything they had. Coney Island vendors hawked some of the first postcards ever to appear in this country; they bore pictures of lavishly embracing couples with the caption "Greetings from Coney Island." Here was shrewd testimony to the growing awareness that, if the million spent their pennies, someone would make millions.

Kasson details the confused responses of the highbrows and even of more open-minded young artists to the mêlée that was Coney Island. The critic, James Huneker, discovered with some horror that voraciousness ran riot at the beaches: "Unreality is as greedily craved by the mob as alcohol by the dipsomaniac." The paintings of modernists like Joseph Stella and Reginald Marsh, which Kasson reprints, present scenes of swirling claustrophobic sensuality, appetite disengaging itself from, and devouring, human form. Kasson is of course himself finally a critic responding to Coney Island and what it means. He demonstrates that working people did let go, did "have fun" at Coney Island in the 1890s and 1900s; selected photographs reveal the boisterousness of the hours spent there. But his research also uncovers patterns more disturbing than anything Huneker and his contemporaries saw. Kasson finds similarities between oppressive work routines and liberating thrills. In the photographs he juxtaposes so tellingly, roller coasters and trolley rides look frighteningly like jazzed-up versions of miners' cars descending into the shafts. With some reluctance, Kasson concludes: Coney Island was a "cultural accommodation to the developing urban industrial society in a tighter integration of work and leisure than ever before." People were allowed to play so that they would return to work and they played in ways that enforced their work patterns.

Damaged by fires, the original Coney Island was destroyed by competition partly inspired by its own example; radios, movies and eventually TV brought relaxation and "fun" straight to the doors of Coney Island's patrons. The million were, and are, being fed at home,

The Best of
Sholom Aleichem
Edited by
Irving Howe
and
Ruth R. Wisse
$12.50

NEW REPUBLIC BOOKS
1220 19th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Distributed by Simon and Schuster

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

if often with trash. Kasson's meticulous and exciting book, clearly destined to be a classic in the still inchoate field of popular culture, leaves its readers at an unavoidable impasse. Intellectuals can not fully share the masses' enthusiasms, even if they wish to; certainly they do not support the increasingly enforced mass acceptance of packaged "fun."

Critics do in part recoup their losses. Coney Island, the popular films of the 1920s and 1930s, or even 1950s rock, all at their inception mass entertainment, become through the sheer passage of time, dependent, not on appeal-to-all which they automatically lose, but on the affection and championship of some, the cultists and the cultural historians. These artifacts and enterprises are by definition no longer mass art, but once again, popular art, sometimes "camp," sometimes (in rare cases) highbrow art. Time has severed them from their original entrepreneurial intentions, and given them what Walter Benjamin called an "aura," if a tarnished one. To "remake" a 1950s film in modern form (one thinks of the atrocious *Grease*) is to recommercialize the commercial past; coals to Newcastle with a vengeance. To show, however, as countless re-run theaters do, 1930s or 1940s comedies, is to appropriate the artifact for the realm of appreciation. When Edmund Wilson closed *I Thought of Daisy* (1929) with an account of a trip to Coney Island, he was already describing something in the nature of a pilgrimage. An uneasy debate about the rival claims of high and low culture, the novel ends in a vast and empty hotel dining room; Wilson's acceptance of this tourist trap, now unable to attract its quota of tourists, brings his narrative to rest. Since mass art is automatically disposable, immediately dated and replaceable, those who pick it up and take it home and have another look transform it, and recreate their ties to their culture.

But this critical recovering of the past is no answer to the contemporary flourishing Coney Islands of advertising, supermarkets, HoJo's, and McDonald's, the funny mirrors in which Americans peer at their distorted resources, hideously jocular images of amplitude that can disaffect the affluent and starve the poor. Walter Hill's recent dazzlingly choreographed film, *The Warriors*, perhaps provides the last word on all our Coney Islands. The film tells the story of one gang's desperate and inventive struggle to make it home from the Bronx to Coney Island through the territory of other gangs set on destroying it. The movie ends with shots of a desolate early morning Coney Island: a derelict playground, a tawdry souvenir of permanently stalled pleasure. The only real "fun" *The Warriors* records is that of muscles and nerves on edge, of the distortions of danger; and no one is laughing. At the very close, Hill can only draw the viewer's attention away from the empty amusement park to the ocean itself, the only uncontested space his camera records, still a common if uninhabitable element.

Ann Douglas

Ann Douglas teaches English at Columbia and is at work on *The Metropolitan Spirit: Secular Culture in New York City, 1919-1935*, to be published by Knopf.

Who Gets Ahead?
The Economic Determinants of Success in America
by Christopher Jencks and others

(Basic Books; $15)

Not too many years ago the United States began a curious experiment. Its object was the elimination of what Lyndon Johnson termed the "paradox of poverty amidst affluence." In tune with the gathering Southeast Asian conflict, the experiment was known as the War on Poverty. Poverty seems to have won that war, we might note from hindsight. And in the aftermath of this victory, the present decade has witnessed the more or less total discrediting of liberal social policy.

Those fond of progressive reform have often blamed the current retreat of liberal domestic policy on the recent economic downturn. However comforting, such an interpretation is hardly in line with the historical facts. As early as 1970 statistical studies of the performance of War on Poverty pilot projects revealed their general inefficacy. Neither jobs programs for youth nor educational reforms showed promise of significantly altering either the degree of economic inequality in society or the extent to which children inherited the economic positions of their parents.

Predictably, the counterattack against the faltering War on Poverty was possessed of a distinctly conservative pallor. Arthur Jensen, in his controversial *Educability and Group Differences*, argued that the poor remained poor because of their genetically-induced intellectual deficiencies. Edward Banfield's *Unheavenly City*, widely quoted in circles of Nixon intimates, attributed poverty to the inability of the poor to "defer gratification." Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in *The Negro Family*, shrewdly located a major part of the problem in the fragmentation of the female-headed black household. It is not surprising, then, that his strikingly effective strategy of "benign neglect" has dominated social reform in recent years.

Christopher Jencks's first book, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effects of Family and Schooling in America* (1972), was conceived and executed while the star of liberal reform was still rising. Intended not to quash but to redirect liberal reform, *Inequality* actually appeared before the American public just in time for the collapse of the War on Poverty. Jencks's overall assessment—that social inequality could be significantly ameliorated only by a direct assault on the economic system through explicitly socialist policy tools—was buried and forgotten. His immediate conclusions—that family background had little to do with the sources of economic inequality and that educational reform could go little distance toward its cure—were, by contrast, elevated to key ingredients in the conservative counterattack of the 1970s. In a political atmosphere which placed any discussion of socialism outside the realm of the possible, Jencks's analysis appeared as a clarion call for retrenchment.

And retrenchment is what's happening. There is little doubt that the 19th-century policies of modern conservatism have a limited future, for they cannot long contain the forces of progressive social change. But modern American liberalism is only slightly less bankrupt in the area of domestic policy, as Jencks's new book, *Who Gets Ahead?*, amply illustrates. The Great Society was not killed by war, recession, inflation,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

energy crises and unemployment. It was doomed by a grossly inadequate conception of the nature of economic life in advanced capitalism.

Supported by a list of agencies representing a Who's Who of social science funding—the National Institute for Education, the Department of Labor, the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the National Science Foundation—Jencks and his 11 co-workers have undertaken a project of painstaking and rigorous consolidation, based on a variety of in-depth statistical sources. Nearly all their conclusions support positions taken either in *Inequality*, or in a book that I co-authored some four years later with Samuel Bowles: *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (Basic Books, 1976). The statistical support, in this new book, however, far exceeds these previous efforts.

A truly major book, *Who Gets Ahead?* unfortunately will be read only by experts and afficionados. For one thing, nearly every page bristles with analytical distinctions accessible only to those with training in statistics and econometrics. For another, Jencks et al do not directly address issues of public policy. "*Who Gets Ahead?*" they explain, "does not devote much space to the problems of public policy. Its conclusions are largely descriptive." To frame their central findings properly, a brief version of the standard liberal perspective on the determinants of economic success is in order.

First, the standard view holds that employers hire and promote according to the employee's present and prospective contribution to production. Income and status are relatively "meritocratic"; they depend on performance rather than caste, class or background. Second, in an advanced technological society, this contribution depends mainly on the worker's cognitive and technical skills. Personality, manners and social demeanor all matter, but not as much as the "bottom line" issue of formal competence—except in a minority of positions, such as high-level sales, entertainment and sports. Third, skills are acquired mainly through formal education, which can in principle be open to all on the basis of native ability and performance. Fourth, native cognitive ability is pretty much randomly distributed across the population, although it may be inhibited by poor family upbringing. The quality of family influence, in turn, depends on its economic and social position.

This picture of status attainment is a familiar one. It implies that some children will be privileged over others for one of three reasons. The first is direct *economic discrimination* on the basis of race, sex or ethnicity by employers, in violation of meritocratic norms. The second is direct inequality of educational and job training opportunities. The third is the power of the family to provide or retard a child's development of social aspirations and cognitive skills.

The policy prescriptions flowing from this perspective involve anti-discrimination legislation, the widespread extension of opportunities for education and job training independent of class, race or sex, and a general attempt to neutralize the impediments of family background.

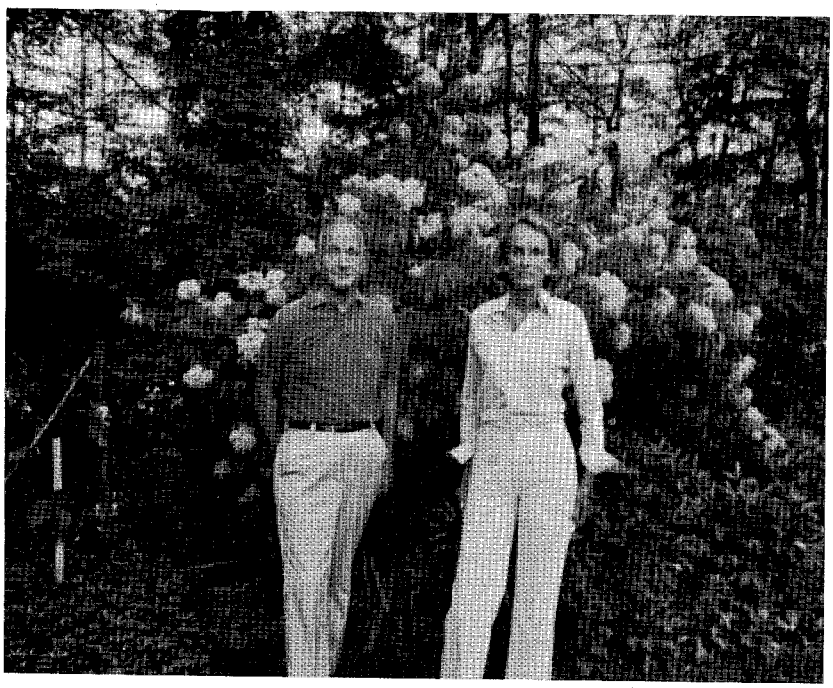
Jencks's first book, *Inequality*, rejected much of this view, arguing that neither family background, nor educational attainment, nor cognitive performance, nor personality traits had much effect on the degree of economic equality in society. In place of this view, Jencks proposed a picture of income determination as depending on direct economic discrimination plus luck—the latter meaning unstructured, relatively random and non-quantifiable mechanisms such as "being in the right place at the right time." He supported this position by verifying statistically that, even when all of the relevant background characteristics are taken into account, income differences remain largely unexplained. Despite the pervasive belief in meritocracy in the United States—you get what you deserve—Jencks's vision of income determination was that of a *lottery*, in which all hold tickets; some win, some lose, and minorities only get half a ticket. He concluded that to alleviate inequality, the economic system—the lottery—must be attacked directly, so as to reduce the dispersion of the winnings: make every player a winner.

Jencks was severely criticized for his emphasis on luck. Yet the lottery model was one of his most insightful contributions, well confirmed in *Who Gets Ahead?* The model, however, was incomplete. Bowles and I accepted the

To the Manor Born
by Mary Lloyd Estrin
with an introduction by Robert Coles

(New York Graphic Society; $22.50)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



This is a collection of photographs for those of us who have often driven past mansions and wondered what it would be like to live in them. Because Mary Lloyd Estrin was raised in the exclusive community of Lake Forest, Illinois, her acquaintances there allowed her to photograph them in the privacy of their magnificent homes. The portraits are posed, in keeping with the formal lives they capture. We are shown well-groomed men and women with their equally well-groomed pets in houses that look like museums—furniture too fragile to flop down on, polished floors easily scuffed. Poise, elegance and restraint are the notes struck in these beautiful portraits. If any trouble lurks behind the subjects' reserve, we can only guess at it by the lines in their faces.

picture of the lottery, but inquired more pointedly into the distribution of the tickets. More precisely, we asked how the probability of winning (that is, of achieving high income) depends on the individual's background characteristics: social class of family, IQ, educational attainment and race. Thus, for instance, we could pose the question: what is the relative probability of an individual from the top fifth in family background attaining the top fifth in the income distribution, over an individual from the bottom fifth in family background? The answer was that the individual of higher status background enjoyed about six and one-half times the chance.. *Who Gets Ahead?* arrives at figures of similar magnitude: "If we define 'equal opportunity' as a situation in which sons born in different families have the same chances of success, our data show that America comes nowhere near achieving it." For instance, considering the full effect of family background on income, the new Jencks analysis points to a relative probability of between eight and 43 times of the highest over the lowest quintile.

The "relative probability" model discredits the standard liberal picture of individual economic success. We found that both family background and educational attainment make strong contributions to economic success, but that these are *not* due to differences in skill and cognitive performance. Parents do tend to pass their economic positions on to their children, but IQ and various other measures of cognitive performance, whether acquired by "nature" or "nurture," account for little of this inheritance. Education does lead to better jobs, but little of this can be accounted for by the cognitive skills education imparts. In addition, measured test scores, presumably an indication of technical competence, make only a small independent contribution to economic success. These results are not only confirmed, but significantly improved upon in *Who Gets Ahead?* on the basis of much more exhaustive data analysis than was available to us. The standard picture of income determination thus appears to be mistaken in viewing cognitive performance and technical competence as the major determinants of earnings, and in seeing family background and education as promoting a person's economic success by advancing his or her accepted technical skills.

Why are skills *not* important? (Certainly skills are needed in a technically advanced economy, and the more prestigious and remunerative jobs require more skill than their lower-ranking counterparts.) The evidence suggests the following answer: job-related skills are in oversupply relative to the demand for them by employers. Their price—that is, the amount in wages employers are willing to pay for them—is, according to standard economic theory, low, whatever their importance. An employer faced with many job applicants, all possessing the needed skills, will choose among them on other grounds, such as diligence, motivation, or perhaps simply by personal preference (Jencks's "luck"). In any case, the evidence seems to show that the United States economy is a skill-surplus rather than a skill-scarce system.

However ironic in this age of supposedly declining standards in our schools, it appears that the educational system has been all too successful in expanding the supply of skilled labor. Not surprising, then, is Harvard economist Richard Freeman's emphasis on the "overeducated American" in his analysis of sharply increased unemployment among college graduates in recent years. Evidently, the US educational system has been able to produce a surfeit of qualified workers in response to the rising demand for skilled white-collar labor in the period 1957 to 1973.

The notion of a skill-surplus economy helps account for the pattern of success and failure of the reform measures of the 1960s. Job training and educational enrichment programs were by and large magnificent failures. The achievement of nearly universal high school education over this period also did little to improve equality of economic opportunity. Indeed, *Who Gets Ahead?* concludes that there are no longer any economic benefits to completing high school, except that it enables people to go on to college! Educational enrichment programs, then, do not enable hitherto disadvantaged groups to fill critical gaps in an economy beset by a shortage of skilled personnel; rather, they lead simply to intensified competition between the haves and the have-nots. Whence also the growing antipathy over this period between white workers on the lower end of the job hierarchy and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

newly-qualified minority entrants.

On the other hand, the direct expansion of income transfer policies in the 1960s and early 1970s, such as welfare, AFDC and Medicare, were wildly successful, and effectively counterbalanced a distinct movement toward a more unequal pre-tax-and-transfer income distribution. No doubt there is some truth in the final sentence of *Who Gets Ahead?*: "Thus, if we want to redistribute income, the most effective way is probably still to redistribute income."

In at least two substantive areas *Who Gets Ahead?* is a clear improvement over *Inequality*. The first lies in the treatment of the economic impact of IQ differences. *Inequality*, in line with its lottery model of economic success, tended to treat IQ differences as on a par with family background and educational attainment—all were considered weak and essentially irrelevant. Despite this general and clearly stated position, *Inequality* tended to lend some credence to the then voguish "genetic theory of poverty" advocated by Arthur Jensen and Richard Herrnstein, by including a long and intricate statistical appendix lending qualified support to the notion that IQ is in part genetically transmitted from parents to children. Bowles and I, by employing the more discriminating "relative probability" version of the lottery model, found that while family and education each contribute to economic success, IQ virtually does not. Thus the nature/nurture dispute has no importance for understanding economic inequality, or in formulating social policy. This result is amply confirmed in *Who Gets Ahead?*

But *Who Gets Ahead?* goes even futher. Bowles and I hypothesized in 1975, on the basis of incomplete data, that the standard educational practice of reserving higher levels of education for students with higher levels of cognitive proficiency is economically irrational. That is, we suggested that the economic return from education is independent of a person's IQ, except perhaps at the tails of the IQ distribution. *Who Gets Ahead?*, on the basis of a far better data base, fully confirms this hypothesis. Only perhaps for the very highest and the very lowest levels of IQ might there be some economic justification for the received wisdom in educational policy that "them that has, should get." There is, then, presumably little cost to a fully egalitarian education policy, involving the commitment to equally improve the cognitive skills of all, up to and including open admissions on the college level. Or rather there would be little cost, were skills scarce and were jobs available for the graduates of such programs.

The second major area in which *Who Gets Ahead?* improves upon *Inequality* lies in the treatment of the influence of personality on economic success. *Inequality* argued that such measures have virtually no effect. *Who Gets Ahead?*, in a far more thorough analysis, finds that the independent effect of a variety of personality measures taken in high school do have predictive value, and in fact, when taken together, significantly more than cognitive performance. This, of course, again tends to discredit the cognitive and technocratic models of income determination which have dominated liberal policy circles in past decades. However, the personality measures available to Jencks et al are still relatively weak predictors. To say that something is a better predictor than IQ is not to say much.

Why do measures of personality traits not more effectively predict economic success? Let us step back for a moment: IQ tests predict scholastic performance relatively well because these tests were scrupulously and singlemindedly developed to do just that. IQ tests, on the other hand, were not constructed to predict economic success; it is not surprising, then, that they do not. The personality measures available to Jencks were haphazard and atheoretical in nature. They were constructed with no concern for predicting scholastic performance, educational attainment or economic success. It is surprising, then, that they have the limited power they in fact possess. In *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Bowles and I suggested that effective personality measures should be constructed not from considerations of the technical nature of work, but from the social nature of the hierarchical division of labor in the modern firm. After a thorough review of the literature, we developed three types of personality measures intended to predict economic success. For jobs on the lowest level in the hierarchy of authority, we suggested that "rule-following" behavior—punctuality, predictability, perseverance and consistency—are indicative of success. For middle-level jobs, we suggested "dependability"—the ability to work for extended periods of time without direct supervision, yet in conformance with the directives of superiors. For high-level jobs, we suggested "internalization of organizational norms"—the ability to be a good team member, to identify with the goals of management, and to do what is required through intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. Studies tended strongly to support this picture of personality and economic success, but we had nothing comparable in scope to the data base employed by Jencks in *Who Gets Ahead?*

This issue of non-cognitive traits is really quite critical. For it relates directly

THIS SCRYING

"Thus the conditions under which the scryer
can scry are, as yet, unascertained."
—Andrew Lang

Pausing by the sink, half-stooped,
I study tea leaves emptied in a drain,
the sawdust sweetness of the pulp,
the pattern of my life to come
spread out before me like a map
in darkness I cannot cut through.
I run the tap, seeing how
the conditions will elude me further,
though I stare through centuries,
blinking into spheres, or hold
my palm out, tracing
my affections in a scrawl of lines.
And whether I shall have you here
beside me for another night
I will learn by reading closely
from your lips, but you
say nothing. It would seem,
the conditions against this scrying
are a bold prevention figured in the stars.

Jay Parini

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the question of whether education contributes at all to economic success. *Who Gets Ahead?* shows clearly and decisively that this contribution cannot be accounted for in terms of cognitive competencies transmitted to students. Bowles and I hypothesized in *Schooling in Capitalist America* that it was precisely the non-cognitive personality traits, such as rule-following, dependability and internalization of norms, developed and rewarded in schools, which rendered graduates more desirable to employers faced with a surfeit of skilled applicants. Again this hypothesis was supported by several small-scale studies, but not of sufficient scope to warrant confidence. Thus *Who Gets Ahead?* may perhaps be overstating the case, but is essentially on solid ground in asserting: "So far as we know, no investigator has ever found a set of attitude measures that explained a significant fraction of the relationship between education and occupational status."

Nevertheless, this fact of life leaves students in the status-attainment process with a *big* problem—and one which is embarrassing in the extreme. We know that family and education strongly affect individual economic success, but we cannot say *why*. I have some confidence that *Schooling in Capitalist America*'s hypothesis on the centrality of non-cognitive traits will be borne out by further research. In the meantime we are faced with a gaping hole in an essential part of social theory.

Jencks has presented us with a researcher's delight and a layman's nightmare. Intelligently conceived and painstakingly executed, yet totally avoiding the technical frivolities so frequently intruding in research of this type, *Who Gets Ahead?* represents a landmark contribution. The results do not simply confirm the obvious, but throw into question much of the received wisdom behind liberal policies toward equalization of economic opportunity and outcomes. The book, however, is forbiddingly inaccessible. The authors have scrupulously avoided the interpretation of their own findings. Nor, I might add, does the book devote much space to developing a cogent position on the sources of income inequality, an alternative to the standard perspective they so effectively discredit. Theory does not arise phoenix-like from the ashes of statistics. No doubt the authors felt that any such speculative foray into the realm of political economy would have called into question the dispassionate neutrality of their parade of statistical findings. Perhaps in a later work Christopher Jencks and his co-workers will undertake this broader task.

Herbert Gintis

Herbert Gintis is a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Celebrations and Attacks: Thirty Years of Literary and Cultural Commentary by Irving Howe

(Horizon Press; $14.95)

Except for an essay of moderate length at the beginning and at the end, this collection consists of very brief reviews and other short pieces written over a period of 30 years. Their range of subject is wide, and Howe wisely makes no attempt to impose a specious unity upon them. What is striking about *Celebrations and Attacks* is the vitality and cogency shared by such a high proportion of its disparate contents; the pieces are not only valuable in themselves but taken together reinforce our sense of Howe's achievement. Repeatedly they remind us of the degree to which he is—to use the somewhat dated term—an *engaged* critic, one who refuses to insulate his literary concerns from his social and political commitments.

While his celebrations of great men and women (Norman Thomas, Edmund Wilson, George Eliot), good books (*Invisible Man, The Magic Barrel, The Golden Notebook*), and unjustly neglected books (John Williams's *Stoner*, Crawford Power's *The Encounter*) are nearly always illuminating, it is the attacks that are most memorable—those occasions when Howe moves beyond evocation or appreciation into argument. He has a trained eye for what is meretricious, flashy or merely crackpot in literary discourse and goes after it with the speed and assurance of a leopard. Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*, for instance, had a big impact in its day; many timorous academic critics were bullied by its length, monomania, aggressiveness and exhibitionism into accepting its thesis: that American (as opposed to European) fiction had failed to achieve "full genitality" in its handling of sexual love and had, from its origins to the present day, been hung-up instead on interracial friendships of a decidedly homoerotic cast. Not Irving Howe. Bringing to bear his own extensive knowledge of American and European literature and his always vigilant sense of justice, he exposes one after another the half-truths of which Fielder's book is compiled and the critical fallacies that underlie his proclamations. "What matters about such statements," Howe writes after quoting a number of Fiedler's juicier comments on the genital inadequacies of American novels (and, by implication, novelists), "is not merely that they are inaccurate, absurd, and sensational, but that they have little to

Contributions Are Being Solicited for a Bronze Casting of Gutson Borglum's extraordinary Bas-Relief of

SACCO and VANZETTI

This new 7′ by 3½′ casting of the only model extant will be displayed permanently at The Community Church of Boston.

Community Church was active in the defense of these martyred men from the beginning, and has annually memorialized them since their execution in 1927.

The bronze casting will be unveiled at a special fall ceremony.

Your tax-deductible contributions will be acknowledged and may be sent to:

Sacco-Vanzetti Committee
The Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston Street
Boston, MA. 02116

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do with literature and even less with that scrupulous loyalty to a work of art which is the critic's primary obligation."

I find it admirable that Howe refuses to see the utility or merit of extreme positions, whether based on the accumulation of flamboyant half-truths into one big non-Truth or upon an enclosed and arcane system of interpretation such as Quentin Anderson's attempt to read the fiction of Henry James in terms of the Swedenborgian beliefs of the novelist's father. Too often critics are overawed by the monolithic power of such an approach, which is then hailed as controversial or stimulating and never subjected to real analysis.

In this collection, as in the earlier ones, we find Howe insisting upon the rootedness of literature in history, society and psychology, upon its connection with ideas and the use that has been made of them. Sounding at times like a more combative and less guardedly urbane Lionel Trilling (a writer whom he admires—discriminatingly—and who figures in several of the essays), he explores the moral dimensions of literature seriously but without lapsing into puritanical rigor. Without philistinism either, he is able, again and again, to refer art back to the "ordinary" experience of human beings. Reviewing Robbe-Grillet's "anti-novel," *The Voyeur*, Howe observes that the programmatic exclusion of "depth" and signification has an unexpected effect:

> *The compulsive anthologizing of events and objects directs our attention not to the surface of things, not to mere phenomena, but—it seems almost perverse—to possible clues as to meaning, response, emotion; and the fewer clues we have, the more we are driven to hunt for them.*

Though warmly responsive to art, Howe is unsentimental about it, and his tough-mindedness enables him to escape the muddle that besets critics who overvalue literature "at the expense of immediate social and personal experience." Thus he finds naive the shock of Milton Hindus that a writer as good as Céline, a man whose works Hindus had idolized, could be a fascist and an anti-Semite; to Hindus's anguished cry that Céline has become a "splinter in my mind that I've got either to absorb completely or eject completely," Howe tellingly remarks that "loyalty to literature and life requires that the splinter be neither ejected nor absorbed."

"Strangers," the first of the longer essays within which the collection is framed, can be regarded as a spin-off from *World of Our Fathers*. It is a semi-autobiographical account of the complex, puzzled and sometimes condescending response of the offspring of East-European Jewish immigrants to native (and nativist) American culture; but it adds little, so far as I can see, to what has already been developed to a greater (though less personal) degree in Howe's splendid book.

The second of the framing essays, "Liberalism and Literature," again shows Howe's capacity for cutting through unreal dilemmas. Starting from Trilling's by now familiar observation that the great figures of European modernism "are indifferent to, even hostile to, the tradition of democratic liberalism" to which most of us subscribe, Howe points out that the gap between imaginative literature and a prevailing political belief has not always been so great. Liberalism in its heroic phase (from the later years of the Enlightenment through the Romantic era and much of the 19th century) "enabled and perhaps even inspired a large portion of Western literature." It is the vision of human possibility—as opposed "to privilege and vulgarity, to the imprisonment of the body and denial of the spirit"—that Howe rightly sees as the great contribution of classical liberalism, a vision that affected writers as different as Stendhal, Dickens, George Eliot, Whitman and Hardy.

Even now, in the literature of Eastern Europe, where the struggle "for elementary rights in the claustrophobic spaces of authoritarianism" goes on, "the liberal vision can again take on historical urgency and moral force." In the West, at this juncture, it necessarily lacks glamor and must settle for a "decidedly more modest relation to the life of culture"—though liberalism still "creates the conditions that enable writers to take a measure of its failings." While Howe agrees with writers who cry out that a merely tolerable world is not enough, he issues a warning: "But let them also be certain that in so crying out, they do not repeat the terrible mistake of a good many writers sixty and seventy years ago, which was to help create an intolerable world."

An awareness of just how intolerable that world became informs Howe's review of Lucy Davidowicz's *The War Against the Jews*, a book which "can hardly be 'recommended' since it yields neither pleasure nor relief—it is an experience of unbroken suffering." And it prompts the scornful eloquence of his reply to Lillian Hellman's bland assertion that those supporters of Stalinistic communism (including herself) who took too long to see what was going on in the Soviet Union at least did their country no harm:

> *Dear Lillian Hellman, you could not be more mistaken! Those who supported Stalinism and its political enterprises, either here or abroad, helped befoul the cultural atmosphere, helped bring totalitarian methods into trade unions, helped perpetuate one of the great lies of our century, helped destroy whatever possibilities there might have been for a resurgence of serious radicalism in America. Isn't that harm enough?*

What limitations as a critic counterbalance Howe's special strengths—his sense of the larger context of literature, his skill in handling ideas and diagnosing their consequences, his polemical energy? The complaint that he does not have an articulated theory of literature, a coherent poetics or a workable linguistics, does not seem to me very damaging. A number of first-rate critics have managed very well without such baggage; besides, I suspect Howe could rather easily abstract a sufficiency of theory from his assumptions and practice if he felt pressed to do so. I do not myself think that Howe is concerned enough with surfaces and textures, with small and intricate rhythms; one cannot easily imagine him writing a celebration of the lapidary brilliance of *The Rape of the Lock* or an analysis of word-play in Nabokov. Such limitations might matter seriously if Howe were generally insensitive to literary values. But he is not. He has a strong feeling for what might be called the macro-structures of literature, its architechtonics, its rhetorical stances. He is good at isolating the ways in which the particular quality of a given writer stems from a fusion of disparate elements: the improbable and the realistic in Malamud's stories, intellectuality and violence in Babel's. Furthermore, he is alive enough to the

Coming:

C. Vann Woodward on

From Brown to Bakke: The Supreme Court and School Integration 1954-1978.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shape, heft and sound of words to have fashioned a distinctive style of his own—a style that combines clarity with vigor, that moves easily from the abstract to the colloquial in a modified version of the New York Jewish intellectual mode that he has done so much to identify. He belongs to a line of honorable, engaged, incisive and pugnacious critics that includes Edmund Wilson and Leavis and reaches back to Dr. Johnson—a line that has done as much to invigorate the literary life as any number of theorists or aesthetes.

Robert Towers

Robert Towers, a novelist and critic, teaches at Queens College, CUNY. He is a frequent contributor to the *New York Review of Books* and the *New York Times Book Review*.

On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978 by Adrienne Rich

(Norton; $13.95)

It's an unhappy fact of life and of prose that ideology tends to coarsen, and sometimes to fossilize, the moral imagination; it leaves little room for nuance or for play. In the writing of some (though by no means all) feminist theorists, insight becomes a bludgeoning rod instead of lightning flash; and the greatest danger for the ideologue who is also political activist is not that she will become corrupt, but that she will bore her readers into disaffection.

Example: In the foreward to this collection, Ms. Rich exhorts us "to question everything . . . to remember . . . to come together telling our stories . . . to look afresh." Of course; yes! But then, after having informed us, somewhat opaquely, that "women's culture . . . is active"—as opposed to the "deadly 'radical passivity'" of "twentieth-century white male capitalist culture . . . whose artifacts are the kind that lend to a deepening passivity and submission: 'Pop' art, television, pornography"—Ms. Rich proceeds from arguably reasonable premise to quite unreasonable argument: "Abortion," she says,

> *has become the most visible and emotionally charged of all our efforts to speak for ourselves and to defend our own life. . . . A pornography of antiabortion literature and imagery exists: the fetus who will never disturb a mother's sleep; the fetishism of tiny fingers and toes. Feminists have responded . . . by demonstrations with coathangers. . . . The debate [is] framed in terms of a morality, an ethic, a social conscience that is manmade and male-defined. The questions raised thereby (At what point is a fertilized egg a person? When does the soul start to exist? Shall abortion, if legal, be federally funded?) are inevitably male questions. . . . It is time that we frame our own questions on this as on every other issue. . . .*

The tender conscience and the tough mind alike are confounded by this diatribe: are we not to consider the fetus at all when we approach the heartbreaking question of abortion? Are "tiny fingers and toes" less real—and less to be considered with fear and trembling—than coat hangers? Why are the ethical, moral and juridical questions Ms. Rich mockingly mentions "male-defined"? (Either both men *and* women have souls, or nobody has a soul; if we do—or do believe—we have souls, then it is not irrelevant to ask at what point the soul starts to exist.) This passage of Ms. Rich's anthology reminds me uncomfortably of a remark made by visual artist Judy Chicago (in whose sculptural work, *The Dinner Party*, Virginia Woolf is represented by a three-dimensional ceramic dinner plate that looks like half a head of lettuce or a vagina, depending on which eye one closes). Bemoaning her lack of two million dollars with which to build a ceramic room for her banquet table and plates, Ms. Chicago said that women would now be deprived of "the kind of monument to women's culture and achievement that there are all over Europe for men's, such as the chapel by Henri Matisse at Vence in France." Now, for one thing, I'd always thought that the chapel at Vence was constructed for the honor of God, and not to praise famous men; for another, I do not wish to be told that Matisse, Michelangelo, Donne, Yeats, et al, do not belong to me because I am a woman. If what feminism says, at its noblest and most useful, is that women are fully human, then Vence belongs to me as much as Jane Austen belongs to me and as much as Georgia O'Keefe belongs to me.

It is vexing to be told (as we are, again and again, in this book) that we must "frame our own questions on this as on every other issue." (What are "our own questions"?) It's particularly vexing in the context of abortion, when battle-trench mentality seems to suggest to Ms. Rich that all philosophical inquiry is inappropriate (or "male-defined") because all questions are "manmade."

It's interesting, this about questions. In an introductory note to an essay about Anne Bradstreet, Rich says certain questions were "unavailable" to her when she wrote about the early American poet in 1966, "partly because of the silence surrounding the lives of women." Rich wishes she had asked, "What has been the woman poet's relationship to nature, in a land where both women and nature have, from the first, been raped and exploited?" I think we can agree that there was, in 1966, a silence surrounding the lives of women; and I suppose I could be persuaded that the question Ms. Rich raises in 1979 is a good one. But I don't know why she denigrates the questions she asked in 1966; the problems she then thought Bradstreet's life posed seem to me no less—and possibly more—compelling. Rich wrote then of Bradstreet's preoccupation with good and evil, of her struggle to remain in a state of grace, avoiding the peril of despair, while "rearing eight children, lying frequently sick, keeping house at the edge of wilderness." I like this essay. It is nice, precise. I'm rather glad, in fact, that Rich wrote it in 1966 and not in 1979, when her questions, I think, tend to become parochial.

I say parochial at the risk of damning myself as a creature of the "patriarchy." Having charged men with attributing universal importance to *their* concerns, and only tangential importance to the concerns of women, feminists of Ms. Rich's ilk now contend that only *women's* concerns are of universal importance . . . assigning to themselves the right, of course, to define "women's concerns." This implied reactionary separatism leads inevitably to the conclusion that there are no truly universal concerns, in which case, pity us all! Ms. Rich has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moved toward a view of the world that obliges her to believe in "an inevitable process by which women will claim our primacy." "It is the lesbian in us who is creative, for the dutiful daughter of the father in us is only a hack"; "it is the lesbian in every woman who is compelled by female energy"; "women working in the common world of men are denied that integrity of work and life which can only be found in an emotional and intellectual [and, one assumes, exclusive] connectedness with ourselves and other women."

Is that not a parochial view? "I believe that a militaristic and pluralistic lesbian feminist movement is potentially the greatest force in the world today for a complete transformation of society." This is a statement, surely, that can resound only within the confines of a lesbian-feminist salon. The women's movement, Ms. Rich says, "is being fueled and empowered by the work of lesbians." I understand that that is different from saying that every feminist is—or must be—a lesbian; nevertheless, doesn't it have the effect of casting doubt on the credentials of all feminists who are not lesbians? Must I, in order to understand the "tangle of race and sex," go to bed with a black lesbian? Ms. Rich implies that I must. But that option isn't open to me; so—am I lost?

No, I am bored to read again that "both middle-class marriage and factory work enslaved women"—bored because to say that is to tell only part of a complex truth, and part, also, of a terrible lie. (A bad marriage taught me, for example, how good a good marriage might be; but there is no room for my truth in Ms. Rich's rhetoric.) Boring to hear witches praised without being given reason to praise them. (Witches are very popular in certain quarters these days; but nobody seems eager to tell us exactly what it was they were supposed to have done.) It is boring to read casual references to matriarchal societies, "gynocentric" or "gynocratic" societies, when there is little real evidence that such societies ever existed, claims for them appearing to rest more on desire than on scholarship. Boring to hear more whining about ironing. (Ms. Rich's excesses provoke me to my own: why the hell doesn't she just buy drip dry?) Boring and possibly corrupting to read that "to be maternally with small children all day . . . requires a holding-back, a putting aside of . . . imaginative activity." (What of those of us who have been made more honest by our children, more courageous, and—dare one say it?—happier? Ms. Rich, by the way, insists upon the right of lesbians to have and to raise children. All very well. But how, exactly, does one go about this? Look for a suitable sower of the seed in a telephone book? If women don't want to be regarded as breeders, why should men wish to be viewed in that peculiarly agricultural light?) Finally it is boring to read what has become an unexamined platitude: "the nuclear family is a principal form of social fragmentation." (I haven't noticed that the extended or joint family, in India, has done much good for women—unless one counts Mrs. Gandhi as a good; and Ms. Rich hasn't noticed that the nuclear family can be, as it was in Vietnam, a unit of resistance against the "white male capitalist culture" she so much deplores.)

Which brings me to that paper word *patriarchy* (which, in its wildest forms, results in such abuses as *patriarchitecture*, meaning, as you might have guessed, buildings designed by men). The word eradicates real differences and distinctions; it is the enemy of nuance. Here is an example: Rich contends that "it is characteristic of patriarchal society" that "the mystical and aesthetic . . . are regarded as separate and mutually exclusive" from the "practical and political realms." Was this true of the Medicis? Is it true of Islam? of the Ayatollah Khomeini? What does one do with the fact that *the same* "patriarchists" who inveigh against abortion fight—as hard as Ms. Rich does—against pornography? My reading of Ms. Rich's book does not even tell me whether I may assume there is any qualitative differences between my son—poised on the brink of adulthood, scared, brave, kind, uncertain—and Idi Amin.

There are good things to be said about this book (though I have been too impatient to go on about them): an acute, unmuddled, aphoristic essay on *Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying*; a long lovely passage about Emily Dickinson that evoked, as has nothing else I have ever read, the poet of the "intense inner event" working in her "white-curtained, high-ceilinged room." This essay reminded me that Ms. Rich was/is a poet—but, alas, Rich's eccentric reading of Dickinson's poems ("they are about the poet's relationship to her own power, which is exteriorized in masculine form") reminded me that Rich is, unhappily, also a polemicist, her respect and love for the written word betrayed by her ideology.

I leave to the end my own biases, my

"Please tell your friends what my heart wants to tell." —VERNA MAE SLONE

Dear Friend—
...as for why I wrote
"What My Heart Wants to Tell"
I read and heard lies and half-truths about Our Mountain Folks; I wanted to preserve the memory of a way of life soon to be forgotten. And also I loved my Father so much I was not willing for him to die.
I hope you understand—
Verna Mae Slone

Here is a heartwarming memoir of rural Appalachia, written by a self-educated woman to correct the "lies and half-truths about Our Mountain Folks" and to preserve a proud heritage. Includes hundreds of bits of mountain lore and ritual: when to plow, what to plant, how to put food by, the arts of dollmaking, moonshining, and just "making do." Verna Mae Slone is a born storyteller in the wonderful storytelling tradition of the Foxfire books.
With 8 pages of photos. $8.95 at your bookstore or from

NEW REPUBLIC BOOKS
1220 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own philosophical, and visceral, disagreements with Rich. "Powerless," she says, "women have been seduced into confusing love with false power—the 'power' of mother-love, the 'power' of gentle influence, the 'power' of nonviolence, the 'power' of the meek who are to inherit the earth." The concepts she here enumerates only to dismiss are provocative and profound; they are the ideas upon which (whether one accepts or rejects or wrestles with them) our understanding of goodness and purpose rests. I believe (I try, that is, to believe, and sometimes I succeed) that the meek will inherit the earth. I believe it because a man said it—a man who, let it be acknowledged, never rebuked women for being female or urged them to be feminine. Ms. Rich has offered me nothing more bountifully mysterious.

Rich says, "The woman whose psyche is still heavily involved with the father, brother, teacher, or other male figures out of her past" is "enthralled to maleness." I am "heavily involved" with my father—a cranky, sick, stubborn, loving, contentious old man (he loves me); I love my brother, the most decent man I know (and he flies to me when I am in trouble, and better yet, when I am not); I am forever in the debt of the teacher who loved me undemandingly when I was a frightened, awkward girl, and whose death, 20 years after the fact, I still mourn; and I love, with all my damaged heart (damaged, many times, by men; yes) my good son (who loves his sweet fiery sister). If I were to abort or silence my love, I would lose, not only the men I love, but my past, my present and my future.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison is the author of *Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah's Witnesses* (Simon & Schuster).

Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel by Simon Schama

(Knopf; $15.95)

It is rare for a book to exceed the author's ambition. Simon Schama, a young but already seasoned and distinguished historian, begins with a disclaimer: "There are several things this book is not," but such is the inherent drama of his subject and such is his own mastery of detail and historical understanding that the book is more than he says; it is in fact a splendid introduction to some of the great themes of modern Jewish history. Schama is the first historian to have had access to the archival record of the Rothschild involvement in Palestine, and in his hands the unlikely story of legendary Rothschilds seeking to transform battered emigrants from East European ghettos into a Jewish yeomanry on Palestine's inhospitable soil comes to life.

The story begins with Edmond—the youngest son of the first Rothschild in France—giving modest support to colonization schemes in Palestine in 1882. In time, Palestine became Edmond's overriding passion. His life's work was continued by his son James, whose widow in the mid-1950s made the final and fitting gift for the building of the present Knesset (parliament)—so that Jews gathered from all the world could debate in Western style and perhaps resolve their often acrimonious conflicts.

Western Jewry had long held out a helping hand to their persecuted brethren in the East; in 1882, after the assassination of Alexander II, a new form of anti-semitism, a composite of popular resentment and governmental connivance, engulfed Russian Jews. At first Edmond did not think of mass emigration to Palestine but of the establishment of a Jewish *pied à terre*, where persecuted East European Jews, for so long held in chains by external prohibitions, by their own poverty, by what Rothschilds thought their habitual *schnorrerei*, or reaching for handouts, could be emancipated into honest farmers, tilling the soil, tending the vines and reclaiming the desert. To realize that vision of independence required Rothschild funds for the buying of lands from Arab or Turkish owners (who themselves were no novices at extracting money) and Rothschild directives for the operation of the colonies. Ensconced in his several palais in Paris, Edmond ran his unprofitable empire, expecting colonists to understand that temporary dependency on Rothschild orders would be the necessary prelude to becoming truly free men. Conflicts between colonists and Rothschild agents abounded, the more so as many of the colonies had to contend with the direst adversity. Edmond dreamed of Lafite vintages in Palestinian soil, only to have that scheme and many others threatened by all the vicissitudes of inclement climate or of disease, often by a concatenation of misfortunes approaching "providential sabotage."

The Rothschilds poured a vast fortune into Palestine, but they insisted on the strictest accounting and the greatest frugality. Disputes between settlers and supervisors, often exploited by Zionists who distrusted the pragmatic Rothschild enterprise altogether, were legion and inescapable: "Just where pump priming ended and featherbedding began was notoriously difficult to pinpoint." In his own way Edmond heeded the claims of religion and insisted on schools providing Talmudic instruction, but he fought adamantly and successfully against the colonists who insisted that religion bade them observe a sabbatical year (1888-89), in which all work would cease. The building of Palestine, as Schama shows, involved heroic work and horrendous fights, which sometimes escalated from calumny to violence.

The material dictates the focus: the Rothschilds and their enterprises are at the heart of the book, the settlers are the objects, often the quarrelsome objects. But the special merit of the book is Schama's ability to relate the particular to the general, to provide the perfectly apportioned and informative background. To begin with, there are no faceless actors in the story. The creation of a Jewish presence in Palestine was the work, witting and unwitting, of many strange and willful men. The youngest and most marginal of the second genera-

AUTHORS WANTED BY NEW YORK PUBLISHER

Leading book publisher seeks manuscripts of all types: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, scholarly and juvenile works, etc. New authors welcomed. For complete information, send for booklet NR-1. It's free. Vantage Press, 516 West 34 St., New York, N.Y. 10001.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion Rothschilds in France, Edmond needed a field of his own, a practical passion. In order to prove himself, he climbed the Matterhorn in his 40s: ". . . he was unafraid and unashamed of inhabiting that territory where convention is left far behind but eccentricity remains remote. He was, in short, the most reasonable fanatic the Rothschilds ever produced." His son James once disappeared for 18 months as an anonymous, common seaman. To be a Rothschild imposes a special burden, and it is almost as if one has to cease to be a Rothschild to become one. Schama has a fine eye for idiosyncracy and complexity. But, presumably because the record proved incomplete, he does skirt some points: how large was the Rothschild fortune, who administered it, what proportion went to Palestine, how did the other Rothschilds view these two champions of Palestine who, true to family tradition, were secretive and certainly kept their dapper distance, their imperious presence, but whose passion for Palestine was not family policy?

The Jewish settlement of Palestine touches on many great moments of the past, but Schama, undaunted by the multiplicity and intricacy of these peripheral themes, provides the necessary perspective for intelligibility. He draws excellent sketches of the Jewish communities in France and Russia—not as dissimilar as has often been assumed; he discusses Palestine at the time when Edmond accepted it as a locale for Jewish regeneration, when it was "a backwater of a putrefying Empire," when "behind the forbidding mask of the Turkish Empire there was an expression of leering venality." Diagrams illuminate carefully assembled information on landholding in Turkey, on agronomy and viticulture, on drainage and disease. On subjects charged with controversy—Arab-Jewish relations, both practical and ideological—Schama writes with remarkable fairmindedness, with a bemused dispassionateness, unpolemically. His book deserves a wide audience, and its style enhances its appeal—despite an occasional ornate or involuted sentence and despite an irritating parsimoniousness in the use of commas.

The explicit merits of the book are many, but it makes an important implicit contribution as well. There is an as yet unarticulated division of opinion about the meaning and value of Jewish life in the Diaspora; in what perspective is that history to be seen and by what standards is it to be measured? By its very factuality and precision, Schama's book advances our understanding of the relations of Jews and Israelis against the background of recent history.

Fritz Stern

Fritz Stern, historian at Columbia and currently Elie Halévy Professor in Paris, is the author of *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichroeder, and the Building of the German Empire* (Knopf).

Prize Stories 1979: The O. Henry Awards edited and with an introduction by William Abrahams

(Doubleday; $10)

Despite what Saul Bellow has said about the novel—that it is "the only form we have right now, a kind of latter-day lean-to, a hovel in which the spirit takes shelter"—the past two decades in America have seen the publication of more great short stories than great novels, and several of our best writers write primarily or exclusively short stories. The present vitality of the American short story is probably best seen in anthologies and collections; prize collections provide an even better occasion to discover where the form has been moving and where it might move in the future. The O. Henry Memorial Awards, established 59 years ago to honor outstanding short stories by American authors, are given annually to 15 to 20 stories, three of which are then chosen as first, second and third prize winners. William Abrahams, who has been editing the series since 1967, has managed each year to assemble an extremely varied assortment. This year's isn't an exception.

Narrators range in age from 17 to 70; subjects range from summer work to socialite one-upmanship to faith healing. One-third of the stories, though circumstances vary considerably, concern husbands and wives growing apart. In the first prize story, "Getting Serious" by Gordon Weaver, 30 years of the narrator's life are spanned. A great deal occurs—his parents' divorce, his adolescence, a knee wound in Korea, his marriage and job, his father's death, his divorce, and, when his mother dies, his return home to sell the family house—but the story encompasses all this by subtly building up a theme about people who are dead and people who are living but are, for all intents and purposes, dead. An Elvis Presley fanatic narrates the third prize story by Julie Hecht, and the fanaticism suggests some interesting things about the relationship between real people and the reality of cultural idols. Among other notable stories—and a few in this collection are notable only for falling far below the standard of the rest—are two with elderly protagonists and one with a teenager. Lee Smith's curious tale is about an aging woman whose strange behavior has brought her children and grandchildren together to decide what to do with her; Alice Adams's quiet story concerns an art historian in her late 60s who, during dinner with her husband, is reminded by the sight of young lovers across the room of an incident years earlier that might have altered her marriage. Thomas Molyneux, who died in 1977 at the age of 34, has a superb story here about a Philadelphia teenager's weekend visits to the New Jersey shore in search of girls and other less tangible things.

In his introduction—refreshingly modest in its generalizations—Abrahams observes that 16 of the 21 stories first appeared in small literary magazines, in contrast with previous years, when the number of contributions from more commercial magazines was significantly higher; a portentous change. *Esquire* has all but closed its doors to fiction; men's magazines have opted for fewer short stories and more excerpts from novels; many women's magazines have turned

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from serious fiction to self-help articles; the *American Review* and *Transatlantic Review* have folded; *Tri Quarterly* and *Ploughshares*, among other noteworthy periodicals, devote their few pages to special issues without fiction. The diminishing importance of fiction in widely-circulated magazines may mean an even smaller audience for the short story, even more meager financial rewards for writers, and (serendipitously?) an even more urgent need for well-publicized prize collections such as this one.

Several other general things about this year's stories might also be noted. Most of the writers, even those who have previously won O. Henrys, are relatively unknown, the exceptions being Alice Adams, Herbert Gold, Henry Bromell and Joyce Carol Oates, whose stories seem to emerge every year in every kind of prize collection. Style, strangely enough, seems to have fallen in value; only two or three stories are stylistically distinct. (Perhaps forging a personal style seems slightly unnatural, too forceful an act of will.) Experimentation with form is also minimal; almost nowhere does one sense the influences of European prose poetry, modern philosophy or new journalism which have inspired some of the liveliest and most significant contemporary experiments with the short story form by such writers as Donald Barthelme, Leonard Michaels, Robert Coover, William Gass and the poet John Ashbery. Narrative experimentation is also at an ebb; uncomplicated reader identification seems of great importance to these writers. One-third of the stories have first-person narrators; yet most of them tell us very little about themselves either directly or indirectly. If these few inert, more reportorial narrators are indicative of a trend, psychological interaction between teller and text is losing favor. While this might mean seeing less of the indulgent "I" for whom the story seems a kind of therapy, it also means seeing less of one of the most fascinating first-person conventions: the "I" who is unwittingly and often devastatingly revealed by his own story.

Most of the characters in these studies go about their lives and loves without any sort of passion, a condition which reflects what their authors conceive as emotionally possible. Divorce, estrangement and death are met limply, prosaically. Profound sadness doesn't exist, and neither does profound happiness: there is not one uproarious moment in the entire collection, not one good comic scene, no frivolity. Too many of the writers represented here have failed to keep in mind that fiction, like us, needs humor to survive.

Marc Granetz

Marc Granetz is the Harvard Scholar at Cambridge University, England.

Brief Reviews

Jake's Thing
by Kingsley Amis

(Viking; $9.95)

Jake's Thing is about a man who can't get it up, "it" being the title character. In fact he really can get it up, but just can't be bothered to do so most of the time. The novel suffers from the same sort of problem. The plot—mostly about the adventures of Jake, a formerly libidinous Oxford don, in the world of sex therapy—is full of comic potential, but the novel rarely generates the energy to take advantage of it. Kingsley Amis shows a few times that he hasn't lost his knack, but most of his narrative is pretty limp.

For example, early in the story Jake treats himself to a pricey bottle of wine and brings it home to consume. Reaching home, he finds his wife entertaining a friend. Jake loathes this woman as only an Amis character knows how to loathe. Etiquette forces him against his will to offer to share the wine. But to avoid actually giving her any of it, he takes the bottle into the kitchen where he frantically drains a bottle of cheap "Tunisian red," pours the claret into the empty bottle and fills the fancy bottle with the cheap stuff. The loathsome friend enters the kitchen as this operation is being concluded, spots the "Tunisian red" bottle and insists that the cheap stuff is good enough for her, thus defeating his scheme.

Fans of *Lucky Jim* (remember the burned bedsheet scene?) will recognize this as a classic Amis situation, good for 10 or 15 pages of rage and wit. But the whole matter is taken up and dispatched in less than four pages, including the space needed to introduce the wife's friend, a major character in the novel.

The dominant tone of the novel is not funny at all, but just plain grumpy. One big set piece in the book is a fellows' meeting at Jake's Oxford college, at which Jake is supposed to put the case for admitting women students. Instead, he delivers a terrible harangue about how women will destroy the life of the college just as completely as they already have destroyed life outside of it. I wish I could say this outburst is presented with comic exuberance, but the spirit is more one of grim relish. There is no hint that Amis finds Jake's misogynist viewpoint anything worth joking about. Both author and subject are apparently so disenchanted with modern life that they have trouble rising to the occasion.

M.E.K.

The Last Mandarin
by Stephen Becker

(Random House; $9.95)

Here is a first-rate adventure story. Jack Burnham, an American who has grown up in the Orient and fought as a guerrilla against the Japanese when they invaded China in the late 1930s, arrives in Peking on a government mission. It is the winter of 1949; the Communists under Mao ring the city. Amid the frenetic scramblings of refugees and Chiang's bureaucrats, Burnham hunts for Kanamori Shoichi, a Japanese war criminal wanted by the American command.

For the first half of the novel Becker moves from Burnham's peregrinations through the city to flashbacks of Kanamori's war atrocities. When Burnham finally finds Kanamori, swathed in a new identity, the plot has only begun to turn; it spins out elegantly for another 150 pages.

It's well that it does—the plot has plenty to compensate for. The narration hits one stylistic bald patch after the next. Sentences like this come in waves: "Burnham sauntered into the Willow Wine Shop late at night with a hundred pellets of Grade A Laotian opium in his right hand and a severe infatuation on his left arm." The "severe infatuation" is the female lead. Adventure writing is best when it gives the illusion of being transparent on the events told. Becker reaches that transparency only when he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

narrates pure action—a chase, a gun battle, an escape.

My main dissatisfaction with the book, however, entails its vision of China. The country's physical properties—smells, sights, sounds and tastes—all seem right. But the narrator continually promulgates all the received Western wisdom about the Orient: that China is the domain of the ageless, incomprehensible, elegant, ironic and sadistic, a hive of teeming life and flimsy values.

But if the parts are refractory, the whole novel hangs true, sturdily pegged on the twin principles of adventure writing—a taut story line and action well recounted.

Mark Edmundson

Mark Edmundson is a freelance writer.

The New Republic Classified

THE NEW REPUBLIC CLASSIFIED IS A WEEKLY FEATURE. Ads are accepted at the discretion of the publisher. Rates: one time ad $1/word, six ads per year $.95/word, 12 ads per year $.90/word, 24 times per year $.85/word, 48 times per year $.80/word. Telephone numbers count as 2 words. P.O. numbers and abbreviations count as one word. Zone numbers and zip codes are not counted. Additional $4.50 for TNR box numbers. Classified display ads are $30/inch. Bold headline, signature and inset available. Complete rate card upon request. Send your check/money order with your copy, or give us your Visa/MasterCharge # and we'll charge it to your account. Copy must be received 19 days prior to the Saturday issue date. Phone orders accepted with MasterCharge/Visa only. Send copy or call collect: Beth McGee, The New Republic Magazine, 1220 19th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. (202) 331-7494.

Personals

STELLA—Thank you for twenty-five years of understanding and warmth. I love you. JACK

Abhor Jewish "Singles" Groups? Meet cultured counterparts of exemplary genre. Send stamped envelope. COUNTERPARTS, 1804 South Blvd., Evanston, Ill. 60202

JAPANESE GIRLS make wonderful wives. Let us introduce you to an unspoiled Oriental Beauty. $2 brings photos, descriptions, application. Japan International, Box 156-NR, Carnelian Bay, CA 95711.

WRITER/PHOTOGRAPHER, 25, attractive, quiet, seeks sex, love, friendship with mature woman. Please include photo w/letter. Thank you. TNR Box #9220

Floods, tornados, freezing cold, and bureaucratic mumbo jumbo. Next year it'll be more of the same. Get the jump on the population shift to the Pacific Southwest. 29 Palms California, a model city ready to blossom. Abundant pure water, clean air, a really nice place to live. Don't wait too long . . .

ORIENTAL LADIES want to write you. Blossoms, Stehekin, Washington 98852.

LATIN LADIES seek friendship. Write "Latins" Box 1716-NR, Chula Vista, California 92012.

CULTURED SINGLES CLUB - Discriminating singles anxious to meet you. Box 342136, Coral Gables, Florida 33134.

DATES GALORE! Meet singles-anywhere. Call DATELINE, toll-free (800) 451-3245.

SINGLE BOOKLOVERS get the cultured, single, widowed or divorced acquainted. Nationwide. Write Box AE, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081. Established 1970.

ALONE? Dignified Computerized Matching, Nationwide, Inexpensive, Guaranteed. "TEAM," 1270 Broadway, NYC

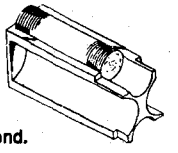
BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY. Information: NR38, RD 1 Box 409, Coopersburg, PA 18036m

Et cetera

RUBI LIP TINT. Safe, non-toxic. $1. Marz, Box 26111, San Jose, Calif. 95159

BOOMERANGS—6279 Sunhollow Lane, Haslett, MI 48840

Unique
COIN COUNTER & PACKAGER



$2.80
2 for $5.00
3 for $6.00
plus .40 (p-H)
Pa. residents add 6% sales tax.

Pat. Pend.

Enables you to accurately count pennies, nickles, dimes and quarters in standard amounts and easily place them into standard tubular coin wrappers. Plastic and pocket-size. Dealer inquiries invited.

DAWN MARKETING CO.
Dept. NR
307 Susquehanna Avenue
Wyoming, PA 18644

Headaches relieved by simple method. $2. Marz, Box 26111-T, San Jose, Calif. 95159

FANTASY FOR THE PHILOGIST. Panties inscribed with "I Love You" on the back. In English, Russian, or French. Hiphuggers lace trim, white nylon, cotton crotch. Size 5 only. $4.95 each. Texas residents add 5% sales tax. Phantasia Unlimited, Box 8506, University Station, Austin, Texas 78712

METRICS ARE COMING! BE PREPARED WITH METRI-KIT. Easy, fast, metric conversions and comparisons for car, office, market and home. Set of 4 wallet size cards $1.00 postpaid. METRICARDS, Dept. NR, Box 27276, Los Angeles, CA 90027

FREE catalog of "Distinguished Gifts." Write to G. Speck Enterprises, Dept. 1KZ. 819 Alston Ave., Gulfport, MS 39501.

Literature

ABSINTHE BOOK
Wanted: Information on ABSINTHE for book. Literary, medical, pictorial references. Barnaby Conrad, PO Drawer 30, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35402

Unemployed? Low Income? Try our monthly newsletter Economic Survival $10.00 per year, 12 issues. T.F.H. Publications, 108 Anthony St., Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060. Sample copy $1.00.

TECHNOCRACY-TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIAL DESIGN available for one dollar from Technocracy Inc., Continental Headquarters, Savannah, Ohio 44874.

FREE BOOK. Prophet Elijah Coming Before Christ. Megiddo Mission, Dept. 72, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619.

WRITERS! Literary Agency needs articles, stories, books! Saleable manuscripts bring $100-$5,000. Free brochure. Meyer, 615 Benton (#28), Aurora, Illinois 60505

Literary Services

Search Service Specialists. Free. No obligation. Out-Of-Print books located. Collector's lists solicited. Books Unlimited, Vaughn Hill, Bolton, Mass. 01740

WRITERS: "PROBLEM" MANUSCRIPT? Try AUTHOR AID ASSOCIATES, 340 East 52nd Street, New York City 10022.

TRY OUR INTRODUCTORY "3 for 2" offer - *response nearly triples with multiple insertions.* TNR Classifieds work!

STILL LOOKING FOR A BOOK? Free search service. Please write Peter Sperling Books, Dept. R, 207, E. 21st St., NYC, NY 10010

LITERARY AGENT SEEKS authors, book length fiction/nonfiction. Reading fee. GELLER, 4515 Twelfth Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219.

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK! Join our successful authors. Publicity, advertising, beautiful books. All subjects invited. Send for fact-filled booklet and free manuscript report. Carlton Press, Dept. RZD 84 Fifth Avenue, New York 10011.

Copyright Yourself. 1 page report $1.00 Olsen, 665 Highland Ave., Peekskill, NY 10566

Announcements

COMPREHENSIVE
"The Challenge To Be Pro Life", Catch it, Read it, Review it, Send to National Right to Life Committee, 529 14th St NW Washington DC 20045

Investment Opportunities

"INDIVIDUAL INVESTOR IN TOMORROW'S Stock Market"—$5.95. Al Smith, P.O. Box 1714, LaJolla, Calif. 92038.

Research Positions

R & D POSITIONS. Chemists, Ch.E.'s, Metallurgists, Mineralogists, Geologists, Physicists, Ceramics, Computers, Electronics, other. California, Texas, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest. Interview, relocation, fee paid. Chemical Executive Search, 6800 Main, Houston Texas 77030.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE GREAT ESCAPES

Employment Opportunities

SAMPLE RESUME—$1.00. V-E Enterprises P.O. Box 12063, Washington, DC 20005

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHERS and other school faculty needed for positions in elementary and secondary independent schools throughout the U.S. Register with R.M. Sandoe & Associates by calling (toll free) 800-225-7986 or 617-262-5380 from Massachusetts.

RESUMES—Complete instructions and examples: $4, Consultants, Box 567—HH, Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621.

Instruction

Bachelors, masters, doctorates. Legal, inexpensive, fast. Free details. Dr. John Bear 2150 Franklin Street, Dept. 65243, Oakland, California 94612.

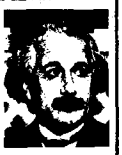
Recipes

European Wilted Lettuce Salad and Quick Yellow Cake. Both for $2.00. Send S.A.S.E. to Old World Recipes, P.O. Box 9215, Madison, WI 53715

T-Shirts

DISCOVER EINSTEIN

Beethoven, Vivaldi, Wagner, Gilbert & Sullivan, Chopin, Sand, Dickinson, Dostoevsky, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, C.S. Lewis, Proust, Shakespeare, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Woolf, Melville, Anais Nin, Agatha Christie, Dracula, Jung, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Spinoza, Reich, Machiavelli, Mao, Golda Meir, Einstein, Margaret Mead, Tutankhamen, F.L. Wright, DaVinci, Escoffier, Bogart, others



T-SHIRTS: white $7. 4/$25. Red or blue $9. 4/$32. SWEATSHIRTS: gray $14. 2/$26. choose sizes S, M, L, XL NIGHTSHIRTS: red or blue (S, M, L only) $12. 2/$22. TOTES: $12. 2/$22. APRONS: $10. 2/$18. all cotton

Prices ppd. CANADIAN customers add $1.50 per piece.

HISTORICAL PROD. box 220C Cambridge, MA 02138

Music

BURTON HARPSICHORDS, SPINETS, AND CLAVICHORDS - Professional Instruments i nkit form, from $195. For brochure write Burton Harpsichords, 727 "R" Street, P.O. Box 80222N, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501.

CHAMBER MUSIC FURNITURE

Hardwood stands, benches, and accessories. Traditional Elegant Designs.

Early Music Stands

Free Catalog

Drawer 2400, Box 277, Palo Alto, CA 94302

Your favorite 45's from the 50-60s. More than 5,000 records available. Request title and artist. Send no money. Will respond with availability and price. Swanson Roth, P. O. Box 12342 Research Triangle, N.C. 27709.

Bumperstickers and Buttons

"DRAFT KENNEDY 1980" - Buttons $1.00, 6/$5.00. SELCO, 2810 Avenue L, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

BUMPERSTICKERS, DECALS, BUTTONS. Low cost, custom made advertising for your Business Special Event, Organization or Political Campaign. Buy direct from manufacturer and SAVE. Please state intended use for appropriate samples. Write for FREE Brochure, Price List and Samples. REFLECTIVE ADVERTISING INC. Dept. NR, 8551 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63114. Phone (314) 423-5495.

Vacation/travel

JOIN WEST INDIES SCHOONER CRUISE - Martinique, Grenada, Guadaloupe, Saba, under white sail. 6 informal days of beach combing in a tropical paradise with congenial shipmates. A great "get away," 'barefoot' and casual. No rush, no TV. Full crew and captain. Share from $310.00. Free adventure booklet. Write Windjammer Barefoot Cruises, Dept. 051, Miami Beach, Florida 33139.

HIGH TOR. Small seaside inn. Footpath to beaches, boats. Box 224, Ogunquit, Maine 03907. Brochure

PUERTO RICO: Luquillo Beach House 3 bedrooms, for rent weekly. Edward Pinney. Box 460. Gracie Station, New York, New York 10028.

Rentals

HARVARD VICINITY—mature married couple desires furnished house or apartment. Call collect evenings (703) 751-0038

Georgian house beside River Nore, County Kilkenny, southern Ireland, 1.5 hours Dublin. Four bedrooms, central heat, furnished. Avaialble mid-July. Weekly: $250 summer, $190 Sept., Oct.-Mar. $150. Ireland (353) 562-4121. U.S. information (212) 799-8751.

CHALET—HOUSEKEEPING, two bedrooms. Fireplace, wooded area, swimming, tennis, $235. weekly. Lester Rhoads, Boothbay, Maine 04537

COME TO OAK PARK—The unique suburb 12 minutes from Chicago's Loop by public transportation. Historic architecture—community activism. Great schools, day care. Free apartment referral service. Ms. Wright. Oak Park Housing Center, 1041 South Boulevard. Oak Park, Ill. 60302 (312) 848-7150.

BOULDERS INN nestled in the Connecticut Berkshires overlooks shimmering spring fed lake. Stately birches, hemlock, mountain laurel, 18th century villages surround. Inn and cottage accommodations. Excellent cuisine. (203) 868-7918 Rte 45, New Preston, Conn. 06777

MASHAGAMA LODGE

Experience Canada's Wilderness. Log cabins on beautiful remote lake. Hike, swim, canoe, loaf, unwind. Good fishing. 1252 Wellington St. E., Sault Ste Marie, Ontario Canada P6A 2P4 (705) 949-7602

Property for Sale

Four acres. Two houses. Small business. Mature trees. 371 foot frontage, U.S. Hwy. 34. $155,000.00 WOODLAND, 10391 Hwy. 34 Grand Lake, Colorado 80447

Camps

Combine Humanistic Sleep-a-way Summer Camp with Academics: SAT Prep Course, College Advisory, High School and all Elementary subjects woven into full program of sports, camping & the arts. In the Berkshires. For brochure: The Allegro School/Open Community Camp, Box 399 R, Claverack, N.Y. 12513 or 518-851-3311

INTRODUCE YOUR AD TO A QUARTER MILLION READERS FOR JUST $1 A WORD!

Vacation/Travel

PUERTO RICO: Luquillo Beach House. 3 bedrooms, for rent weekly. Edward Pinney. Box 460. Gracie Station, New York, New York 10028.

*SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER. Pay for 2 ads—get # 3 FREE!.

Telephone numbers count as 2 words. P.O. numbers and abbreviations count as one word. Zone numbers and zip codes are not counted. Additional $4.50 for TNR Box #'s. (complete rate info on preceding pg.)

Send your check/money order with your copy, or give us your Visa/MasterCharge # and we'll charge it to your account. Copy must be received 19 days prior to the Saturday issue date. Phone orders accepted with Visa/MasterCharge only. Send Copy or *call collect*: Beth McGee, The New Republic Magazine, 1220 19th St., N.W., Washington, DC. 20036 (202) 331-7494

My ad reads:

THE NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Diarist

Leave the Bombing to Us

A few weeks ago *TNR* published an editorial recommending that federal subsidies to Amtrak, the nation's passenger railroad corporation, be reduced. Among other criticisms, we noted that even in terms of Amtrak's supposed virtues—namely energy efficiency and cleanliness—it is clearly inferior to the less glamorous inter-city bus, whose virtues I have personally touted in the pages of this journal (see "The Homely Sister," *TNR*, February 3), and which requires hardly any help from the government. From the volume of reader mail denouncing our Amtrak editorial, I judge that train buffs are a vocal and easily inflamed group. They also have a reputation for being politically potent, but I could not have imagined how far they are willing to go in subsidizing their favorite mode of transportation. The *Washington Post* recently revealed that the Defense Department now thinks that the best way to keep our next generation of intercontinental missiles out of harm's way is to shuttle them back and forth on railway cars. Here is a clear example of shameless Pentagon waste, encouraged by a powerful lobby. Why else would the military prefer rail cars over the cheaper and cleaner alternative of putting our missiles on buses? One admitted advantage railroads have over buses is that they are more comfortable for the passenger; but presumably not even train buffs would try to argue that the comfort of our nuclear missiles should be considered a vital part of national defense. The only good thing to be said for this Pentagon decision is that it will confront Tom Wicker with a painful dilemma: should he continue to oppose the MX missile as an escalation of the arms race, or should he endorse it as valuable recognition and support for his cherished railroads?

I have written before of my dismay at poll results suggesting that middle-class American wives find reading a more diverting pastime than sex. Now *Advertising Age*, the advertising industry's trade publication, informs me that because of the great success of commercial sperm banks, "some specialists believe that home insemination kits could eventually become available as over-the-counter consumer products." As if it's not bad enough that American husbands find themselves ignored by wives engrossed in drugstore paperbacks, now modern technology threatens drugstore products that will make husbands totally superfluous. And I take it as cold comfort that unwanted males needing outlets for their reproductive urges can find it in the growing demand for sperm bank donors. To a relative traditionalist like me, all this is quite unsettling. I confess I am utterly baffled by the news that one of the laboratories involved in all this business is "teaching husbands how to do the insemination procedure at home." If they're going to have to get involved in it anyway, I suspect most husbands would just as soon employ the traditional method of home insemination.

There is other disturbing news on the sex front. My first reaction to a recent article in the *Washington Star* was that this time Ralph Nader had really gone too far. The Food and Drug Administration has announced that it intends to begin inspecting sexual devices to ensure that they meet its recently enacted "performance standards." How the FDA will go about measuring how well vibrators and assorted other accoutrements perform, I wouldn't presume to guess. It is something of a relief to learn that the FDA doesn't consider sexual devices a high priority. "We normally wouldn't go out to check vibrators unless it happened to be a slow day," one official said. If ever an industry cried out for immediate deregulation, this is it.

For the past week I have been part of the A. C. Nielsen company's survey of American television viewing. As requested, I have dutifully logged every show I have watched, and how many people have watched with me. But my log surely will be a disappointment to America's networks, since it is mostly blank. My limited viewing isn't due to intellectual snobbery—my tastes run to "The Rockford Files" and the now-departed "Bionic Woman"—but to my long hours spent pursuing the truth on behalf of *TNR*'s readers. I wonder, in any event, how accurate these logs can be, given the strong incentives to cheat, which might tempt a man of less impeccable integrity than myself. Naturally I have insisted on being perfectly honest, and I even made a point of watching "The Rockford Files" so I could put it down on my log. I was sorely tempted to doctor the log to improve the rating of my favorite local newscaster, an incomparably engaging and fair-minded woman named Sue Simmons who drew such small (though obviously highly discriminating) audiences as a weeknight anchor that she was moved to the weekends, when hardly anyone watches the news. But I suspected Nielsen wouldn't believe that 20 of my friends just happened to drop by to watch the news at 6 and 11 o'clock on both Saturday and Sunday.

When historians a century hence reflect on the decline of religion in American life, they will find a rich archive in the files of the United Church of Christ. Like many large Protestant denominations (including my own United Presbyterian Church), the UCC spends much of its time instructing us all on political matters. Recently a UCC spokesman testified against a bill introduced by Representative Lionel Van Deerlin that would lift most federal restrictions on telecommunications service, as if to say that God offers us definitive guidance on how AT&T should be regulated. In order to clear the agenda for important topics like telecommunications regulation, America's churches must avoid being distracted with comparatively trivial matters like propagating the gospel, even to their own members. The *Washington Post* recently reported that a survey of Episcopalians ("God's frozen people," as one Episcopalian describes them) found that only 57 percent believe that Jesus was divine; 21 percent think he was "divinely inspired"; 17 percent think he was a "great leader." And three-tenths of one percent of the Episcopalians surveyed think Jesus never existed at all. Those, a friend suggests, are probably the priests and bishops.

S.C.

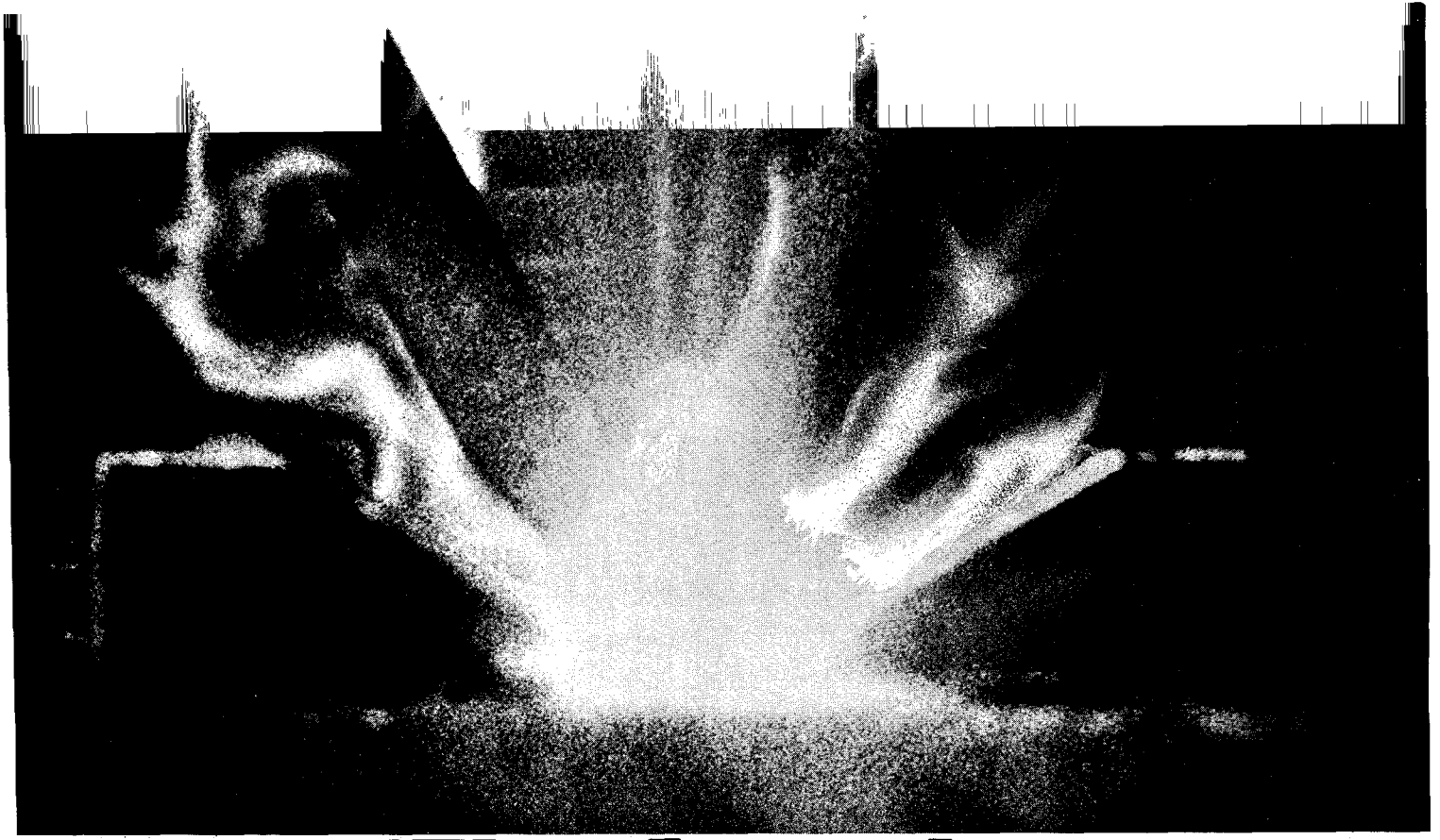
Coming:

Seymour Melman on Nuclear Tyranny.

•

David Herbert Donald on *Been in the Storm So Long.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Atomic Bond.

Using tiny explosive charges, Western Electric engineers are bonding metals with the elemental "glue" of the Universe.

Here's how it works. The atoms of all metals have a natural attraction for one another. If it weren't for the ever-present film of impurities coating the surface—the oxides, nitrides, and absorbed gasses—all metal atoms would bond to each other when brought together.

Exploding Things Together.

But the force of a high-intensity explosion on two adjacent metals will clean away the film of impurities. The explosion literally "blows" the impurities off the surfaces. So the atoms of the different metals can bond together.

The bond that results is stronger than both of the metals themselves.

As an industrial technique, explosive bonding has proved valuable in the manufacture of such heavyweight products as bi-metallic gun barrels.

Pinpoint Explosions.

But how would explosives work in the delicate, intricate world of telephone circuitry?

Scientists at Western Electric's Engineering Research Center solved the problem by developing ways to miniaturize and control explosive bonding. Soon, they could splice the ends of two thin communications wires inside a miniature explosive-coated sleeve.

And they could repair tiny defective contacts on delicate circuit boards. These gold contacts (membrane-thin "fingers" 1/10 by 3/4 of an inch) are reclad by thin sheets of gold foil (.0005 inches thick), coated with explosives. The repairs are literally "blown" onto the contacts, without disturbing the delicate circuitry less than 1/10 of an inch away.

Miniaturized explosive bonding is only one way we're helping your Bell Telephone Company hold down the cost of your telephone service today. For the future, it promises the benefits of bonding widely disparate metals and all sorts of other materials.

You Can Take It For Granted.

Most important, explosive bonds are contributing to the clarity of communications, the reliability of switching, the taken-for-granted assurance you have when you reach for your telephone.

The atomic bond—it's another innovation from Western Electric.

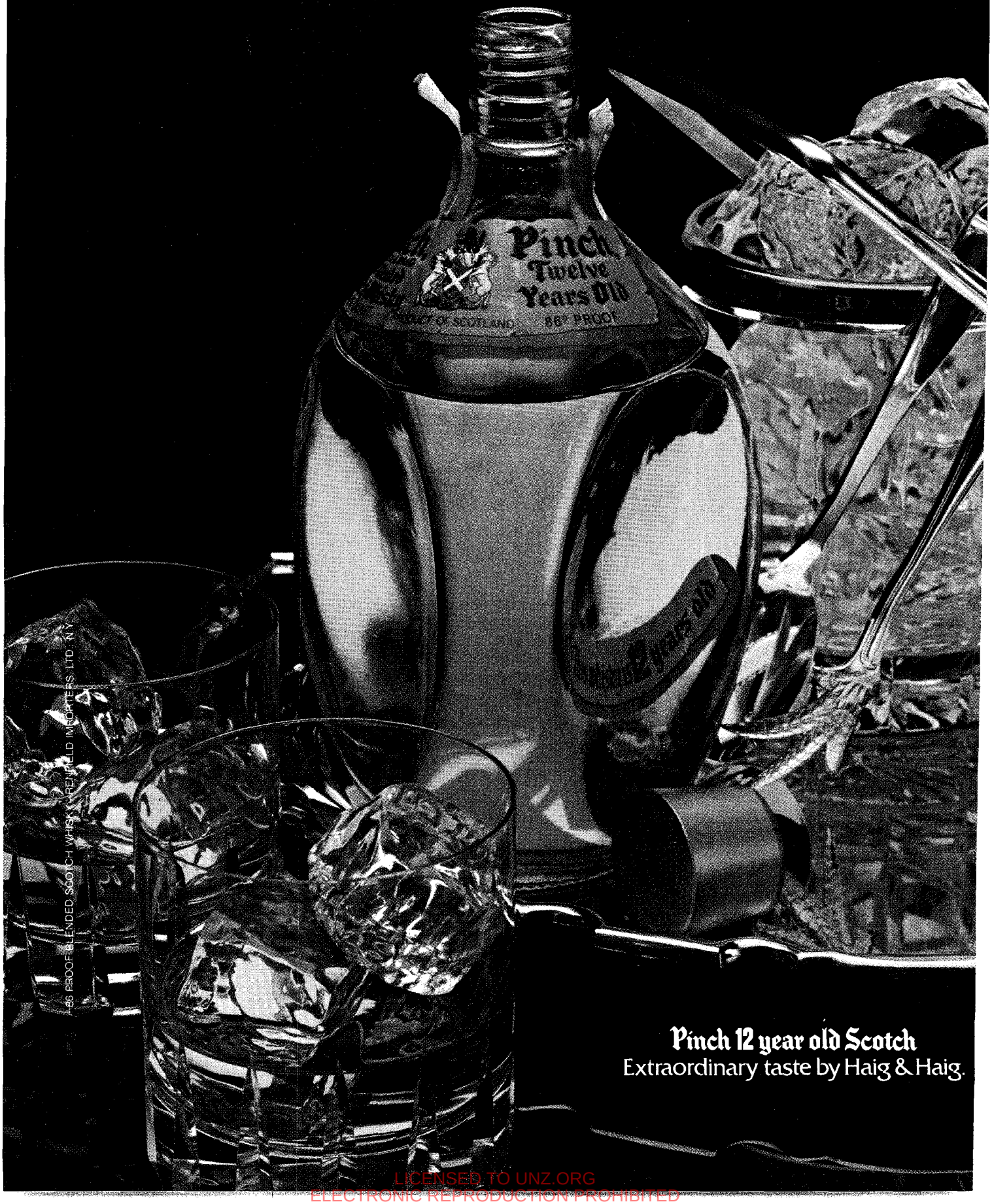
Keeping your communications system the best in the world.

Western Electric

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We sat, my father and I,
and indulged in fine cigars and the taste of Pinch.
Then we did something we rarely do.
We talked.

Precious moments deserve more than ordinary scotch.



Pinch 12 year old Scotch
Extraordinary taste by Haig & Haig.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED